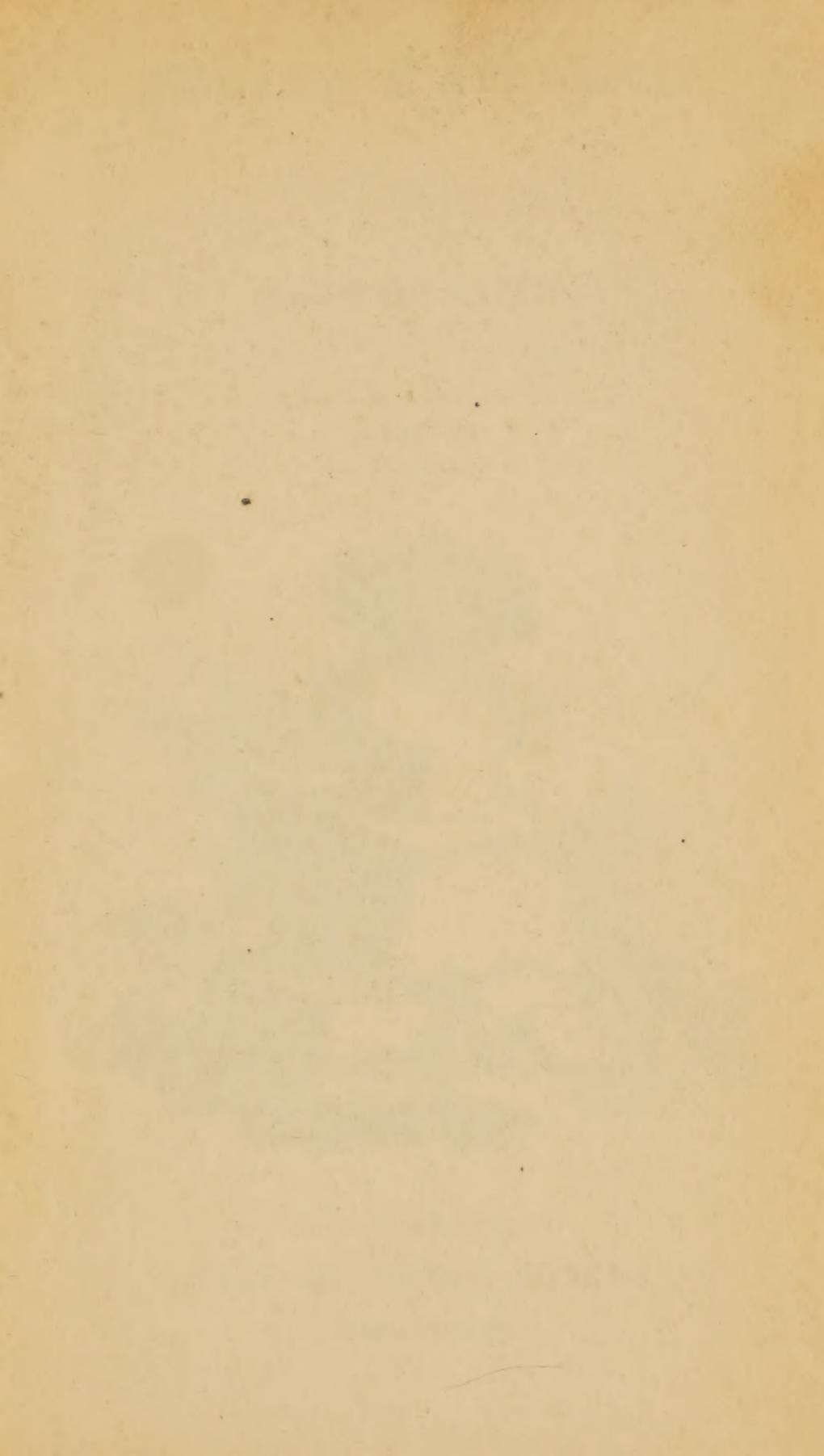
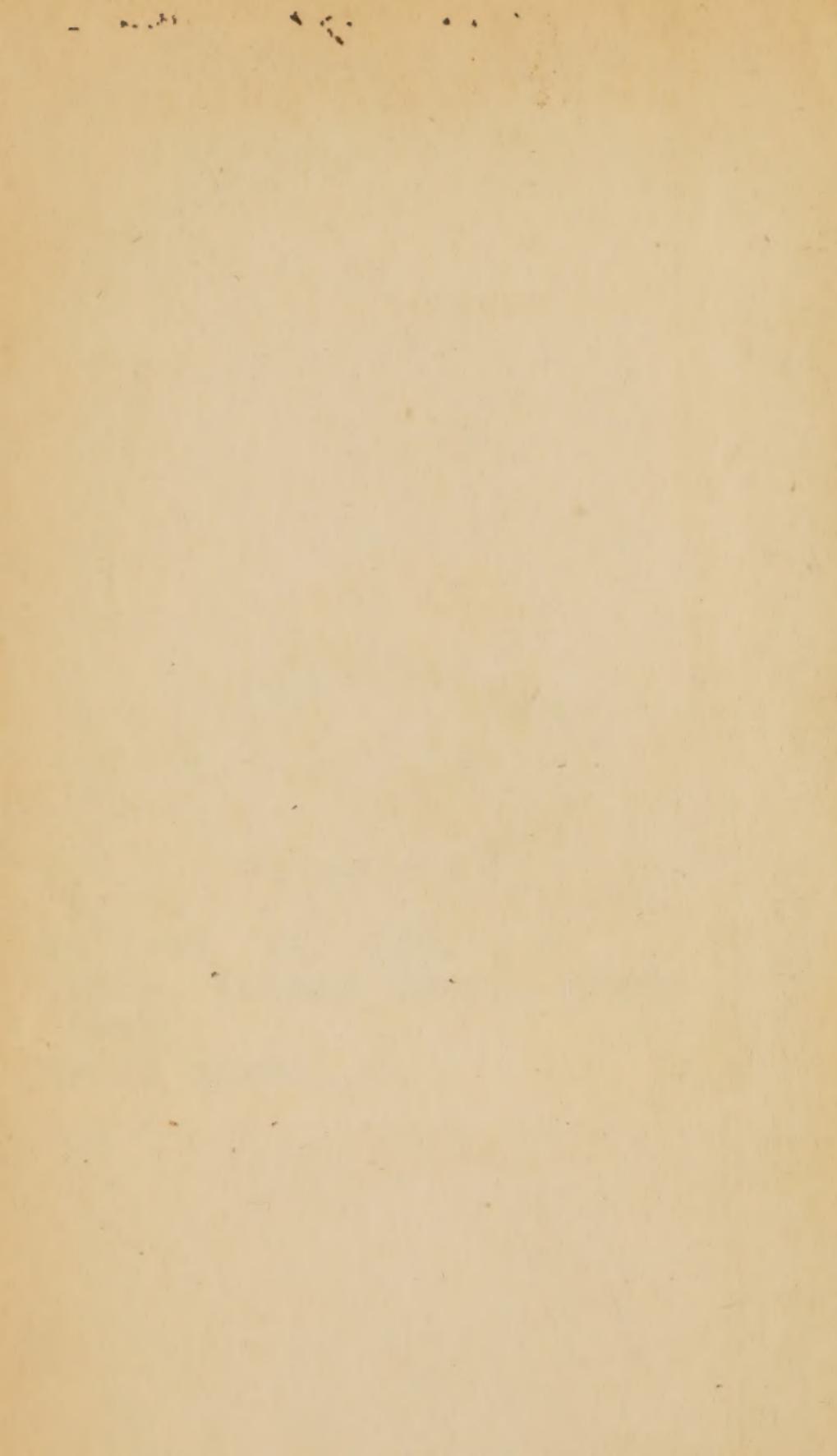




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Mores catholici

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J.W. Bayntun -
Mores Catholicæ;

OR,

AGES OF FAITH.

[Kenelm H. Digby.]

BOOK VI.



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Page 192.—*For conciatus read cruciatus.*
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MORES CATHOLICI;

OR,

AGES OF FAITH.

THE SIXTH BOOK.

CHAPTER I.

Now let us to the blind, external world descend, for some will say that we have hitherto seen only shadows of justice on ideal ground ; yet, reader, after we shall have left the region of desires, and advanced some space along the path on which we are now entering, which seems with more realities beset, you will perhaps, at times, be well content to have incurred that charge. There may be moments in which you will feel like the pensive traveller at twilight hour, who journeys on through an obscure, cold forest, when he looks back with regret to the pleasant cloister's pale which had received him for a short space at noon ; brings before his mind's eye the rich garniture of its sanctuary, and imagines that he still gazes upon each peaceful nook, which he had noted with such interest, remarking how sweetly it was for prayer and meditation meet ; thinks too that he sees the solemn, hooded men, and their youthful disciples, assembled in angelic choir, leaving no place vacant, while rings aloud that quick melody,

“ Te lucis ante terminum.”

Your feelings perchance will resemble his, when he contrasts this scene of peace and order which he has left, with the desert around him, dusk with horrid shades, and with his own wild state, solitary, wending he knows not whither—when o'er the broken passes, now each moment

darker, there comes a gloomy sound, and a wind impetuous, sprung from conflicting vapours, drives all its might against the forest, plucks off the branches, hurling them afar, while beasts and shepherds fly.

“Beati qui esuriunt et sitiunt justitiam: quoniam ipsi saturabuntur;” truly mystic words of the Divine Ruler, which seem at first to promise no speedy consolation; for how can the natural thirst, ne’er quenched but from the well whereof the woman of Samaria craved, be ever sated on that earth which is not his kingdom? It is true, a confidence in the ultimate triumph of justice characterized in a very remarkable manner the men of the middle ages. “One finds” says William of Jumiègue, “in almost every page of Scripture that the son’s house is overthrown by the iniquities of a wicked father, and also conversely, that it is rendered firmer by the merits of a good father *.” Speaking again of the conquest of England by William, the same historian beholds only fresh proof of the justice of God. “The English,” he says, “were punished for the murder of the innocent Alfred, and for their remorseless massacre of Toustain; and on the following night God avenged them in causing a great slaughter of the Normands, because they had sought plunder, and ‘their feet had been swift to shed blood†.’” Such observations are common in all writers at that time. Nevertheless, profoundly was it felt in the hearts of those thoughtful men that the beatitude arising from the spectacle of justice was not reserved for them here. Follow St. Bonaventura in his meditations on the Baptist’s death:

“O God, how didst thou permit this?” exclaims the seraphic doctor. “What is to be thought of this, that John should thus die, who was of such perfection and sanctity that he was thought to be Christ? Consider the greatness and excellence of John. Peter is crucified, and Paul is put to death with the sword, but yet the dignity remains to the precursor. Rome is purpled with the blood of Martyrs, but John is admirable above them all. Who so gloriously announced? Who thus filled with the Holy Ghost even in his mother’s womb? Of what other man does the Church celebrate the nativity? It was he who first preached penance; it was he who baptized the King

* Hist. Norman. Lib. VII. c. 1.

† Ib. VII. 36.

of Glory. John was a patriarch, but the chief and end of patriarchs. John was a prophet, but more than a prophet. John was an angel, but chosen among angels. John was an evangelist, but he first announced the Gospel. John was a martyr, but between the nativity and the death of Christ. He was the voice ‘crying in the wilderness,’ the precursor of the Judge, the herald of the Word. If now you contrast the excellence and dignity of John with the profound wickedness of those who slew him, you will have a just subject for astonishment; and, if it be allowable to say so, even of murmuring against God. For an executioner is sent to cut off his head, as if he were the vilest murderer. Behold him, then, reverently and with grief: see how he offers his neck to the executioner, and bends his knees, and, giving thanks to God, lays down his sacred head upon some block or stone, and patiently endures the stroke. Behold in what manner John departs —the intimate friend and relation of our Lord Jesus*.”

You perceive, reader, what strong language was permitted in the middle ages, in reference to the delay of justice, and you may conclude that it certainly was not by the beatitude of vision that just men expected to be satiated on earth. How, then, you will ask, did they interpret this divine promise?

It belongs not to an historian’s part, to speak of its present and literal accomplishment in the hearts of men, by the operation of these ineffable mysteries of the Passion, designed by the Eternal Wisdom to fill with divine justice the weak and fragile vessels of the human nature†. Only on what is visible to mortal eyes and productive of fruit on earth can he be required to speak; yet not less important is his evidence within just limits, to shew how the sacred thirst of sweet desire might be at once partially allayed. Let us hear the gracious words again:

“Beati qui esuriunt et sitiunt justitiam.” “Not the satiated, therefore,” concludes Hugo de St. Victor, “but the thirsty are blessed; for,” continues he, “all the good that mortal life can attain to, is to wish for good, since to possess it is reserved for the future life. If it had been ‘blessed are the just,’ who could have applied this to

* Meditat. vitæ Christi, cap. 30.

† Ludovic. Blos. Scriniolum Spirituale.

himself? But having regard to our imperfections, and compassionating our infirmity, the Divine Master pronounced those to be blessed who desired justice*.” Here a clue is given to relieve us from our embarrassment, and to encourage us to proceed in the present history; for, having pointed out the thirst or the desire intellectual, which animated men in the middle ages, and being about to speak of the effects discernible, we infer from it that there is no necessity for our undertaking the task which the objectors would lay upon us, desiring us to exhibit that fulfilment which is only to take place when the Divine glory shall be revealed to human eyes, where souls shall never more hunger or thirst, but enjoy that fulness of pure and everlasting joy which the prophet tells of, when he says, “*Satiabor cum apparuerit gloria tua†.*” No, excepting by the ardour of desire and the light of faith, that glory had not appeared during the times of which we trace the history, any more than to these latter ages, or than it will appear to those which will succeed while the present state of things endures; for whatever some vain speculators may suggest, from time to time, to entice and deceive unstable minds, the infallible page forbids us to expect on earth the unresisted reign of justice—“*Donec finiatur sæculum, sursum est Dominus‡.*” It was in fact enough, therefore, for our purpose, to have proved that the men of the middle ages felt sorrow at the spectacle of injustice, and bore that mystic and expressive sign which in old prophetic days was shown to the man of God.

No one, however, required to be told that the Church, by such indications of a spiritual thirst, understood something more than barren sighs or empty symbols. “Constitutum est,” says an ancient author, “veram devotionem non tam in precationibus quam imitatione consistere §.” She knew of no justice towards God, which did not include analogous duties towards man; of no beatitude for those who were unwilling to combat, and who did not exert all their efforts to win by perseverance the celestial crown.

* Hugo de St. Victor, *Eruditiones Theologicæ*, Lib. I. tit. 133.

† Ps. 16.

‡ St. August. *de Consec.* dist. 2.

§ *Instruct. novit.* III. c. 4.

"Non enim dormientibus divina beneficia," says St. Ambrose, "sed observantibus deferantur*." The language which she addressed every evening to her combatants, resembled that of a general to his troops when in an enemy's country, and might have been taken for a passage out of Thucydides, as that which gives the words of Nicias to his soldiers on the retreat from Syracuse. "Be courageous, for there is no place near where you can with indolence and effeminacy be saved" ὡς μὴ ὅντος χωρίου ἐγγὺς ὅποι ἀν μαλακισθέντες σωθείητε†.

In the middle ages, this necessity was forcibly and briefly expressed by the letter of the mystic branch first used with such signification by Pythagoras, and, in Christian times, adopted by St. Isidore in his Etymologies to represent human life; the stem signifying youth, uncertain as to its way, and the right arm most arduous to denote the laborious path of justice‡. Those will, indeed, have read the last book to little purpose, who will need much assurance here; for to love and worship the divinity, was, as the Church declared, to be just. She prayed to Him who sheweth the light of his truth to those who err, that they may return into the way of justice; that all who made profession of Christianity might avoid the things which were hostile to that name, and follow those which were suitable to it§. It was, in short, an universal conviction during the middle ages, that neither desire nor sorrow, nor prayers, nor hymns, nor festivals, nor any exercise of religion, could be more than vain, unless accompanied with works of justice, in obedience to the divine laws. Every one knew that there were two ways, as John, the monk of Cluni, observes in writing the life of St. Odo, in which men could become apostates from God; "that each man might depart from his Creator either in faith or in works; and that, as he who departed in faith was an apostate, so he who returned to the works of sin without doubt was to be considered an apostate, although he might seem to hold faith||."

"Every Catholic," says Raban Maur, "ought to culti-

* Hom. Lib. IV. in cap. 4 Lucæ.

† Lib. VII. 77.

‡ Isidori Etymolog. I. 3.

§ Third Sund. after Easter.

|| Bibliotheca Cluniacensis, 49.

vate all virtues equally, that being nobly adorned within and without, he may be a worthy guest of the Eternal King, and being mounted in the spiritual chariot, may pass on to the everlasting country. He ought to study prudence, he ought to be filled with understanding and justice, to be religious and humble, with fortitude to possess magnanimity, confidence, patience, perseverance, and with temperance, to be clement and moderate; and above all these, he should have peace and charity, which is the bond of perfection *." We have not, therefore, in the preceding book been conversing with airy visions and unsubstantial reveries, for by the triple hunger and thirst which Bernardine of Sienna distinguishes as that of justice, of grace, and of glory, man gave three things to God, honour to his Creator, love to his Redeemer, and fear to his Judge; three things to himself, purity, watchfulness, and discipline; and three to his brethren, obedience, concord, and beneficence, according to the social relation in which he was placed towards them †. It belonged to the wonderful character of Catholicism, in consequence of the eucharistic faith, to unite the interests of the interior, for which the mysteries of the Church provided; and those of the social life, while each of these, perhaps, naturally tended to a separation, and to be satisfied at the expense of the other. This faith, as a modern philosopher remarks, united them indissolubly; for if this mystery, which was itself only an initiation into the mysteries of the future existence, carried the soul beyond the present order, on the other hand, the disposition which was strictly necessary to every one who approached it, was the accomplishment of all the obligations of common life, and particularly of those which one was most disposed to disdain. Extending its vivifying influence to the two extremities of the moral world, it reached at once the most humble duties and extacy; and the same actions which made the soul enter into the angelic society, drew it back by the line of justice into the society of men.

In retracing the manners of the Christian Society of past ages, far be it from any disciple of the humble school, to imitate the style of those modern writers, who seem to

* Rabani Mauri de institutione clericorum, Lib. III. c. 27.

† S. Bernardini Senensis, Liv. III. de Beat. Serm.

consider their own personal judgment as an infallible tribunal, by which they may judge as with the balance of Omnipotence, the thoughts and deeds of mortals, declaring where fell the just, and when was their fall irreparable.

There is nothing in common between the Christian philosophy and this pretension to behold human affairs with the same eyes as those of Providence, and to judge them with the calm security of eternal justice,—this high historical optimism, which shows truth and error as merely relative and never absolute,—these sonorous apologies of the victory according to which the present is always in the right, in short, this dramatic development of humanity, of which each act is to be represented in succession *.

Ah ! who are we, to sit in judgment thus to determine what men were guilty, and what innocent, in these ancient times ? “ Nullo modo eorum innocentia coronamur, nullo modo eorum iniquitate damnamur,” as St. Augustine said respecting the Donatists †.

What is to us the number of the just, or of the unjust, in past ages ? It will be sufficient if we can say of all men with truth, in the words of the ancient poet ; “ neque quæ recte faciunt culpo, neque quæ delinquent amo.” And yet with what caution and timidity should even this be uttered ! For who is to judge them ? The historians of the middle age never presume to explain the troubled course of the world, by tracing the secret sources of disorder, which they knew were often hidden from the eyes even of contemporaries. Pascasius Radbert, in his life of Wala, speaking of the events which attended the de-thronement of the emperor Louis, says, “ there is no one who can believe, no one who can conceive, the things that were done, in what way they were done, or how many were done. There is no one who can understand why or how they happened ; who were the authors of the evil, or who of the good ‡.”

Men must wait for that burning day when the Supreme and Omnipotent Judge will make inquiry, and will choose them as a man chooses his son who hath served

* De la Philosophie au commencement du XIX. siècle.

† De Unico bapt. cap. 16.

‡ Lib. II.

him ; and then O man as a voice from heaven declareth, “*videbitis quid sit inter justum et iniquum, et inter servientem Deo et eum qui non servit ei.*”

Modern historians have never any doubts respecting the secret motives and causes of actions and events. All is unveiled to their eyes. Nothing is left obscure, and as there is more ingenuity required to discover a bad than a virtuous motive, it would be always easy to foresee, before consulting them, what view they would take of actions. Du Fresnoy says, that this alone should lead us to suspect Davilla and Varillas, and esteem their histories but slightly.

Even without weighing the historic difficulty, it is clearly absurd for any men to write as if they were themselves removed to an infinite distance above the wisest and greatest souls that were given to the times which they pass in review. Acute little men, but certainly neither humble nor wise, pass thus like beings of a different order from mortals, through the walks of history, as through those of real life, rashly judging rather from their own preconceived fantasies, than from any calm and cautious scrutiny of things, and then pronounce their sentence with a cool incomparable assurance, that but ill conceals the fierce and turbulent passions which are often raging beneath the surface. St. Augustin well describes such men, styling them, “*curiosum genus ad cognoscenciam vitam alienam, desidiosum ad corrigendam suam* *.”

In proceeding to speak of the admirable fruits of justice which characterized the men of Catholic ages, I am prepared to witness the incredulity of many ; for as Nicias said of the Athenians, respecting what had passed in Sicily, I know that the moderns in general will not judge of these things as they really are, and as those know who beheld them, ἀλλ' οὐδὲν αὐτοῖς εἴδεντες διαβάλλοι. It is from whatever may be advanced by any who can speak well, by any vain flashy man declaiming, that they will be convinced †.

One must be prepared also to witness more than incredulity. Many historical writers resemble those democratic leaders who used to denounce as enemies of the people

* Confess. Lib. X. cap. 3.

† Thucyd. Lib. VII. c. 48.

all who questioned the justice of their particular views. Like Anathagoras the Syracusan, who on the approach of the Athenians being, as Thucydides says, the man most credited by the multitude, cried out, “Whoever is of a different opinion, is either not a liberal man, or not a friend to the constitution of the state *.” “This is an age,” says Sylvio Pellico, “in which to lie and to mistrust to excess, are things so common, that they are hardly regarded as vices †. Speak with twenty men in private, nineteen will only express their horror against such and such persons. All seem inflamed with indignation against iniquity, as if each alone of all the world were just. To calumniate all the individuals of whom society is composed, with the exception of a few friends, appears to be the universal wish.” It is the same with writers of history.

If these insatiable but fickle wanderers were asked, as was the original tempter and calumniator of mankind, whence came they? their reply might be in his words; “circuivi terram, et perambulavi eam.” Like the troop described by Æschylus,

*εὐμήχανοι
δὲ καὶ τέλειοι, κακῶν
τε μνήμονες σεμναῖ,*

they show themselves at every turn ingenious, not forgetful of evils, and so pass on through regions which their breath has withered, to exercise their inglorious dishonoured office, insensible to mortal interests, and alienated from heaven ‡. The old Roman historian expresses always reluctance to credit a narrative of turpitude, saying, “non libet crederi §.” But nothing seems to give such pleasure to our historians, who pretend to represent the middle age, as the discovery of some deed of atrocity, in an ancient chronicle, though indeed they need it not; for with them no might, nor greatness in mortality can censure’scape; “back-wounding calumny, the whitest virtue strikes.” Their charges are general, and for that reason

* Thucyd. Lib. VI. 36.

† Dei Doveri degli uomini ?

‡ Eumenid. 381.

§ Livy IV. 29.

alone, their testimony would have been rejected by Socrates, who used always to say, *οὐ ζητῶ πανάμωμον ἀνθρωπον**. In fact, they have praise for no one. “He rides tolerably well, but what is it to a Hippo-centaur?” Thus they introduce into history, what Pasquier styles the *Sçavoir* partisan, far more dangerous than the pedantic knowledge, for this consists in seeking the reputation of ability, by never giving praise to any object, however excellent, by refusing admiration; always having some defect to condemn, either in the style, or conduct, or choice, or motive, of the actions; or if it be impossible to do so, by significant gestures, that others may believe there is still something wrong †.

Novalis judges better of the office of an historian, saying, “When I think upon the general right, it appears to me, that an historian ought necessarily to be a poet; for it is a poet alone who can understand how to connect events together properly. In their narratives, I have remarked, with calm delight, the tender feeling which is evinced for the mysterious spirit of life. There is more truth in their relations than in learned histories. Although their personages and events are invented, yet the sense in which they are conceived is true to nature.

Whoever approaches modern history, with a sincere wish to avoid error, must bear in mind that it is a domain which hath been for three hundred years constantly infested with false guides, who, from different motives, were all equally disposed to lead men astray, by calumniating the manners of the ancient Catholic civilization. In the first rank came the rash judging proselytes of the new religions, who sought to justify their separation, by denouncing the number of the reprobate, as if their reform was to extend even to what had been determined by heaven. “They behold,” says Louis of Blois, “a great heap of straw in the Lord’s granary, from which they judge that there is no grain amidst it.” *Paleas vident, grana non vident, vel videre nolunt* ‡. After these came the Rationalists; and it is a curious and just remark of Bonald, that the same doctrines which deny the original corruption of man, always exaggerate his social corrup-

* Plato Protagoras.

† Lettres de Pasquier, Liv. X. 7.

‡ Ludovic. Blos. Epist. ad Florentium.

tion *. In fine, the atheists and hypocrites laid the most dangerous snares of all, for being animated with an immortal hatred against Catholicism, they formed a diabolic school, which had its secret traditions, by means of which they were most skilled in all the cunning wiles of deception. These were the men who interrogated history with so much the greater severity, as their deductions and admonitions proceeded from a source different from charity. What is this cry from the broad way trodden by them who are not true to God or to themselves, which yet sounds like the voice that in the days of Damian, came from the desert? In the ages of faith, it would have deceived no one. Ives de Chartres was told by some calumnious persons, that the manners of the monks in his diocese were corrupt; but that holy and acute bishop, after hearing their testimony, came to the conclusion, that they were not to be believed; “*quibus non est credendum de aliena injustitia, quamdiu non discesserint a sua †.*”

Severe and unforgiving men, do you not fear to have some searching questions addressed in turn to yourselves? You do, indeed, reprove with indignation, the crimes, real or imputed, of the ancient Christian society. You proclaim many things respecting abuse, superstition, and hypocrisy, which might have been, and which very often were delivered by a S. Bernard, or a Gregory. But whence to you this zeal? The moral discourse which the creature, eminent in beauty once, addresses to our Saviour, in the immortal poem of *Paradise Regained*, is sufficient to undeceive us with regard to such professions. Your's is an old comedy.

Claudius accusat mœchos, Catilina Cethegum.

The world, which once heard a Gracchus inveigh against sedition, will hardly be convinced that it has entered upon a new epoch, by hearing a Pedro of Brazil accuse the monastic orders of having degenerated from their original sanctity. Sooth, it is paying a poor compliment to the sagacity of modern times, when these writers, in which France and even Spain have lately been

* Du divorce.

† Iponis Carnot. Epist. CX.

so prolific, expect their readers to believe that an attachment to the manners of the ancient Catholic civilization, is synonymous with robust profligacy in every form. The weak credulity with which such compositions are received, presents no unprecedented phenomenon; nor is even the artful nature of their calumny due to any progress in the science of deception. In protestations of regard for justice and morality the pagan oracles were equally loud; in allusion to which St. Augustin said, “the malignity of demons, unless it transformed itself into an angel of light, could not have fulfilled its object*.” Indeed, there is no great difficulty here; for when disposed to triumph in their own social progress, they turn round with exultation to display, not the obedience and charity, the filial love, fidelity and honour of their contemporaries, but the different signs, real or imagined, of commercial prosperity, national glory, and of a wondrous material civilization, the goodness of their manufactures, goodness of their laws, goodness of their police, goodness of their prisons perhaps, “as if,” to use the words of St. Augustin, “it were the greatest good of man to have all things good excepting himself†.”

“The eyes of perverse men meet with scandals everywhere, but,” says an ancient ascetic, “the good man enjoys tranquillity and repose.” Who can be deceived as to the cause which troubles the repose of these modern writers, so shocked at the profligacy of the middle ages, when, in order to prove it, we find them furnishing out their pages with the most detestable pictures, and adopting a style which cannot be reconciled with a very tender solicitude for the virtues of their own time? No, let them be ingenious, let them compose books that may indicate ever such extensive, such multifarious research, still, when all is done, when they have displayed before us all the regions of the bad, their evidence must be rejected as partial, and their judgment as untrue. Without doubt it is an easy task from the class of facetious writers, from the author of the *Fabliaux*, from the troubadours, and the poets who favoured the religious innovators, to draw a picture of the middle ages most inviting to a licentious imagination, and favourable to the conclusions of those

* *De Civitat. Dei*, Lib. II. 26.

† *Ib.* Lib. III. 1.

who advocated the overthrow of the ancient society; but where philosophy is heard, collections of this kind cannot be received as evidence, and, therefore, with such researches we need have nothing to do. I shall follow Plato's rule, *καὶ τὸ μὲν αἰσχρὸν καὶ ἀνόσιον οὕτε παρίεμαι ἔγωγε, οὕτε λέγω πολλοῖς γὰρ καὶ ἄλλοις ὑμεῖν ταῦτα ἐπιμελέσι καὶ εἰς τὸν ἔπειτα μελήσει χρόνον**.

Nevertheless, to these historic walks, reader, come not expecting to be led through a region of pure serenity, unclouded and untroubled. “Good with bad expect to hear;” supernal grace contending with sinfulness of men. “We do not,” says St. Clemens Alexandrinus, “receive simply all philosophy, but that concerning which Socrates speaks in Plato; for there are, as they say, round the mysteries, many rod-bearers, but few Bacchanals, *πολλοὶ μὲν ναρθηκοφόροι, Βάκχοι δέ τε παῦροι*, obscurely signifying that many are called but few chosen†.”

“In all places and times of the saints,” says Thomas à Kempis, “there have been good and evil, faithful and incredulous, devout and dissolute, benevolent and perverse, spiritual and carnal; and the good by their patience advanced daily to greater good, and the evil, like smoke, evanesced in the malice of their own desires‡.”

It is from the heights of this ascetic philosophy that we should survey the various ages of the world, rather than from any ground, however agreeable, of historic theory, which can never be perfectly solid, since it fails, even under the genius of that illustrious Catholic historian, of whose views some Protestant writers have availed themselves, in contrasting what they represent as the manners of the primitive times with those of the middle ages. What skills it to declaim about primitive times, when we find St. Paul telling the Corinthians that there are vices among them which are not even among the Pagans; and when we can read the account which St. Cyprian gives of the manners of a Christian society in his age?

“Recollect,” says Benedict Aretino, “how many heretics endeavoured to stain the tunic of Christ in early times, and what corruption of manners arose from the Donatists, Manichæans, Priscilianists, and other monsters

* Epist. VII.

† Stromat. Lib. I. c. 19.

‡ Serm. I. Part 5.

of that kind, from which the Church, during the middle ages, was in great measure free. What evil men were opposed to Athanasius, Basil, and Chrysostom? If the multitude of martyrs was great, there were many also who through fear or ambition denied Christ and returned to idolatry. On the other hand, if you will look at the history of the last 400 years, you will find in the first place, those two great lights, than which none ever shone with greater lustre or sanctity, Francis and Dominick, from whom such institutions arose as antiquity had never seen, producing an incredible multitude of saints and of illustrious men, by whom the Christian faith has been so much aided, that men have learned to live in a manner far more Christian than before; for many vices in the world have been by their means either diminished or wholly extirpated*."

The language of the primitive fathers will never sanction an exclusive admiration for their times. "It is certain, brethren," says St. Augustine, "that all we who are in the body of the Lord, and who remain in him, that he also may remain in us, must of necessity in this world until the end live amidst the wicked. I do not say amidst those wicked who blaspheme Christ, for it is rare now to find any who with their tongue blaspheme him, but there are many who do so in their lives. Of necessity, therefore, amongst such men we must live, even until the end†."

St. Augustine was obliged to warn the catechumens against being scandalized by the lives of unworthy Christians, in words that would well become the Catholic missionary of the present day, addressing his separated brethren, who might well warn the illustrious Protestant from being unwilling to be in the Church where they are, or from wishing to be there such as they are‡. "Let not the vain Pagans," saith he, "deceive you, or the false Jews, or the deceitful heretics, 'nec non in ipsa Catholica mali Christiani, tanto nocentiores quanto intiores inimici§.' You, therefore, believing these things,

* Bened. Accolti Aretini De Præstantia virorum sui ævi dialog. Thesaur. Antiq. Italia, tom. IX.

† St. August. Tract. in Joan. 27.

‡ St. August. de Catechizandis rudibus.

§ Id. De fide rerum quæ non videntur.

beware of temptations, lest that enemy should deceive you, not only by means of those who are without the Church, whether Pagans, or Jews, or heretics, but also by those whom you may behold living ill within the Catholic church; that you may not imitate those who are either abandoned to luxurious and shameful pleasures, or addicted to vain and illicit curiosity, whether of theatrical exhibitions, or of remedies, or of diabolic divinations, or engaged in pomp and avarice, and pride, or in any life which the law condemns and punishes. You must not suppose that these perverse men, although they enter the walls of the Church, will hereafter enter the kingdom of heaven, because at the proper time they will be separated, if they do not previously separate themselves from the evil*."

The middle ages were ages of crime, and in that respect they form no singular epoch in the world's history; but mark, it was crime along with infinite pity, infinite horror for sin, and infinite desire of justice; and on this side what parallel to them can we find in human annals? Amidst social disorders what multitudes were obeying the call to perfection, and at the voice of the preacher leaving all to follow Christ! There were wars and crimes in abundance, of which I shall hereafter speak, but luxury, more cruel than arms, did not avenge the wrongs of the oppressed. Assuredly, there are names belonging to our ancient history of horrible dispraise, recalling the deeds of men upon whom the multiplied villanies of nature did swarm, men possessed by seven demons that drank iniquity like water. Each generation had sad experience of all malicious acts abhorred in heaven; but on all sides what cries of horror,

iώ δίκαια, iώ Σπόντοι τ' ἐριυγέων;

what a profound sense of injustice!

"Iniquitatem odio babui et abominatus sum!"

what innocence, goodness, sanctity, and wisdom: "custodivit anima mea testimonia tua: et dilexit ea vehementer!" What a minority, to use a modern phrase,

* Id. de Catechiz. rudibus.

opposed to the wretched, godless crew*! Instead, too, of imitating the malice of our adversary, and gathering evil from good, misconstruing or abusing it, men in those times gathered good out of the gross and palpable evil which existed around them. "I confess," says Murator, "that when young, I was of the opinion of those admirers of ancient Greece and Rome who thought that there was nothing but horror and barbarism in the history of the middle ages. I need not say how completely I had to free my mind from that error. In these ages which are stigmatized by so many, there were not wanting admirable princes, and great examples of fortitude, sanctity, and other virtues. There are many reasons why we should embrace and love the history of Europe from the decline of the Roman empire till the sixteenth century †."

" You speak of the evils of these times, but I maintain," says Benedict Aretino, " without fear of being misled, that crimes were not practised openly as in the ancient world, nor so frequently; that there were many nations by whom they were held in horror, and that almost all who professed the religion of Christ were more timid to do wrong; so that I am astonished how any man of learning can assert, without blushing, that he prefers the ancient civilization to that of the middle ages ‡."

Our ancient writers remark the importance of producing in history things reprehensible, as well as those worthy of praise §. That the crimes of the unjust were often designedly, and almost with affectation, brought into prominent relief for the instruction of men, is a fact that can be witnessed even in the wild fabling of chivalrous romance, which furnished, in many respects, a true picture of cotemporaneous manners. Thus we find a lady saying to a knight in Gyron le Courtois, " Certes, you speak not as a knight errant, but as a villain and envious knight, and I doubt not you are as vile in deeds as you are in words! and sooth for your villany I am greatly desirous

* Mabill. Præfat. in V. S. Benedict, s. 1.

† In Scriptores rer. Italic. Præfat.

‡ De præstantia virorum sui ævi dialog. Thesaur. antiqu. Italiæ IX.

§ Wadding an. Ann. Epist. ad lector.

to know you : for as one desires to know men of honour and virtue on account of their goodness, so in like manner, one desires to know bad men on account of their wickedness, that one may know where one ought to shun them* .”

What is it that demands tears from the just and thoughtful, that desolates the heart, and leaves it almost without strength or hope ? It is not the crimes of the wicked—it is not the persecution of the Church, to which the world and the Christian society have been always accustomed. It is, if it be not a solecism to utter such a sentence, the assent of the good. *Œdipus of Colonna* declares that “ he knows no just man who praises and defends all causes alike † ;” but for what degree or form of injustice have not the moderns invented an excuse, and where shall one find a head that is not crammed with all the sophisms which England, France, and Germany have produced during forty years ? It is the men who come forward as the just, who now condemn the just, and find a thousand reasons for absolving their persecutors. None are so sure of being left defenceless as the innocent and holy. The Poet says in general of this earthly world, that “ here to do harm is often laudable : to do good sometimes accounted dangerous folly.” What would he have said had he seen later times ? In the general movement and agitation of minds individual reason seems to have lost its power of distinguishing in morals, as if the tree of knowledge, for which we gave up all, had lost its ancient virtue. Amidst the general wreck of intelligences, the very sense of justice seems to have perished. Every thing innocent in humanity, and noble in the poesy of heroes—every thing that was formerly of good report, and enshrined in the hearts of men and women with universal veneration, is now, as if by common consent, pronounced to be either a superstition, or a false principle, or a matter of indifference, perhaps even of scorn ; and no longer for the children of perdition, but for the just, dishonoured in their own eyes by witnessing to what degradation their moral nature is subjected, seems reserved the crimson brow. This is what the sinful nations, the people laden with iniquity, have come to, for having forsaken the Lord, and blasphemed the Holy One of Israel.

* Ed. cf. XXII.

† V. 748.

In the middle ages, which men stigmatize as barbarous, an act of injustice or dishonour was regarded with a feeling of abhorrence which could not be uttered. The disdainful and hardly translateable expression of Æschylus, *κατάπτυστος*, “a thing to be spit upon,” is the only word that can convey any idea of the intensity of that indignation *. Nothing seemed more admirable to Marsilius Ficinus in the character of Lorenzo de Medicis than this horror which he always evinced of bad men †. On the other hand, the joy inspired by just deeds, and by beholding the sweet and gracious order of holy institutions, gave birth to rapturous strains, which indicated an habitual and almost angelic felicity. To speak of justice, and to recount high deeds of virtue, every one sought, whether in grave and solemn history, or in fabulous and poetic symbol, and since the draught is grateful ever as the thirst is keen, no words may speak their fulness of content. Religion, and chivalry inspired by religion, existed amidst all the disorders of the worst part of society. “It is precisely this contrast,” says a modern historian, “which constitutes the great characteristic of the middle ages. Contemplate the heroic times of all other societies, and you find no trace of a similar contradiction. The practice and the theory of manners are nearly conformable. It is not seen that the ideas of men were purer or more elevated than their daily actions. The heroes of Homer have no scruples or sorrow for their brutality and egotism. Their moral sense is not better than their conduct. It is the same every where else excepting in our middle ages. There crimes and disorders abound, and men have evidently in their minds and imaginations lofty and pure desires and ideas. Principles were better than actions. Their notions of virtue are much more developed, their ideas of justice incomparably better than what is practised around them, or than what they often practise themselves. A certain moral ideal soars above this stormy society, and draws the attention and respect of men.” “Christianity, no doubt,” he adds, “was the cause of this fact, which is, at all events, unquestionable. It presents itself every where in studying the middle ages; in the popular poetry, as well as in the exhortations of the

* Eumenid. 68.

† Epist. Lib. VI.

priests. Throughout, the moral understanding of men rises and aspires far above their lives *.”

Let it be observed, that in ages of faith crime assumes a still darker and more diabolic form, at least in the imagination, than in times when the supernatural grace and light have been withdrawn. The vicious, like scorpions, when the sun darts its brightest flames, are most inflamed with the poison of their malignity when the sun of justice most serenely shines. It is only after knowing the perfect good, that men can know absolute evil; in point of fact, indeed, a countenance of Judas would probably be found in the vicious quarters of London or Berlin sooner than in the Borghetto at Milan, where Leonardo da Vinci went every morning and evening, for more than a year, in search of one, without success: but in the order of conception it is different, and therefore the Don Juan of Lord Byron is but a poor scholar of Moliere’s Don Juan, a mere boyish libertine. The Spanish Don Juan, as Moliere paints him, was a grand catholic conception, which a mind not initiated in the mysteries of faith, or narrowed by the modern philosophy, can scarcely comprehend. In an age of faith, impiety and injustice, as we have remarked, inspire a kind of terror and astonishment which we find in those serious comedies of the middle age. In our times they only furnish episodes in the style of Fielding, of which the heroes seem poor silly youths—poor masks wishing to play Satan’s part, and yet whose simple humanity appears constantly under their infernal costume.

“ Again,” as Bonald observes, “ in Christian ages and nations, amongst the acceptable people, followers of good works, nothing is remarked by repining and censorious minds but vices, because virtues are its ordinary state and alone authorized, in the same manner as classical enthusiasts remark nothing but virtues in the pagans, because with them vice was the common state, and permitted by the laws.” In times of general corruption, every one is said to be just—“ all are honourable men.” In ages of spiritual illumination the secular poet will pursue the saintly lamentation, and say

———“ The just are few in number;
But they neglected ; av’rice, envy, pride,
Three fatal sparks, have set the hearts of all
On fire†.”

* Guizot, Cours d’Hist IV. 6.

† Dante Infer.

Hear Richard of St. Victor commenting on the Divine words, “*Omne caput languidum, et omne cor mœrens;*” “the Lord knows his work; nor can the greatness or multiplicity of its diseases escape the Chief Physician. Behold, he tells you in these words what is the excess of the disease—infirmity from within, and wounds from without; and to crown all, a contempt for the remedy; ‘*Non est,*’ he adds, ‘*circumligata nec curata medicamine, neque fota oleo.*’ Behold our evils. Learn, then, O man, and if thou disdainest to be taught by man, learn at least from him who teaches man knowledge; learn, I say, the extent of your evils, and of your misery; for by these exterior, you are warned to correct your interior maladies; to know that you are weak in will, weak in affection, weak in action *.” Moreover in the middle ages the vices opposed to the Christian religion were open and avowed, and therefore less dangerous to the intellectual than to the material interests of society. History and poetry professed then to tell of good deeds and their opposite, between which the line of demarcation was broad. There were not professions and employments sanctioned by the custom of society, and supposed to be honourable because profitable, which required in those who pursued them the very opposite qualities from those which belong to the Christian life, though they may be consistent with the morality and honour of those who are in sight of heaven reprobate. What are now examples were then crimes. A calumniator, a detractor, was not concealed to himself as to others by having the conduct of a journal. A lover of discord and opposition, and an accuser, was not presentable among Christians under the name of a public speaker. A hater of all religious and social institutions, under the influence of Catholicism, was not honoured as a liberal statesman, who conceded to the times what was just. A despiser of God and the celestial life was not regarded as a man of practical abilities, and enlightened philosophy. In short, what remarkably distinguishes the middle ages from later times, was the impossibility of any one proceeding by degrees from step to step in the employment and cultivation of dispositions all deemed sufficiently honest by society, until at length

* *Richardi S. Victoris de statu interioris hominis. Pars I. Tract. I. c. I.*

unawares he found himself placed in a situation in which it would be impossible for him to discharge the essential duties imposed upon all who desired to be real and living members of the Christian church.

In ages of faith, as in Catholic nations at present, the manners of some persons became corrupt. A youth of noble and generous nature, might be deceived in the way of which Solomon bid him beware. But in latter times, and in the northern nations, the very rule of manners and laws became corrupt, and nature's frailty was depraved, not only into an art, but into a system of philosophy. In the former, disorders were personal, and sought the shade ; in the latter they were published and authorized ; and while the profligate Italian laid his dark scheme to seduce his neighbour's wife, the grave and formal German carried her off in virtue of a judicial sentence, and married her before a notary *.

Travellers have remarked, with Bourgoign, that the external decency of manners at Madrid was such, that the most shameful pleasures were obliged to assume a veil of mystery. The public opinion, as well as the police allowing of nothing to offend the eye, or endanger the imagination †. In fact, the error of the philosophic sin, beyond the sphere of secret societies, is the error of a much later period, constituting this last heresy, which now desolates the earth. Abailard loudly protested that he had never conceived or uttered such a blasphemy ‡ ; and certainly no trace of it is found in his writings.

With respect to the professed satirists and censors of the middle age, I would say, “ To know of some is well, but of the rest silence may best beseem.”

There are things, as a writer of the middle ages observes, which it is better to pass over in silence, than to handle, lest the enemy should inject their defilement into the secret recesses of the mind §.

The first reflection suggested by the Fabliaux is undoubtedly sad. Le-grand-d'Aussy, concludes at once from their gross and licentious expressions, that in these ages the corruption of manners was at its height, under the sanction of religion. An historian is, however, not so quick in his conclusions. At all times he is aware that

* Bonald du Divorce.

† Vol. II. 353.

‡ In Apol. ad fid.

§ Thom. a Kempis, Epistolæ I.

there have been vices, and that the age of the troubadours and minstrels was not exempt from this sad law of humanity. But the question is, Did the Fabliaux, and the tales of poets, express accurately the society of these times? The authors of these Fabliaux were people greedy of gain, who went from town to town courting the favour of the frivolous and profligate; and as priests are obliged to give an example of purity of life, it is not wonderful that the malignity of such persons should be exerted in ascribing parts to them which were inconsistent with virtue. It has been said lately that the Fabliaux expressed the party of the opposition of those times: but a distinction should be made here. The licentious poets of the twelfth century never dreamt that their songs could injure either the Church or the State. They made a bad history of a bad monk, because the contrast was amusing, since that order of men were generally followers of perfection. But you will not find a word to warrant our supposing that they attacked the monastic spirit. The Church was sacred to them; they had faith; but their satiric vein must have vent; and they bring a monk on the stage without the least idea that religion will lose anything. Tartuffe would then in some respects have been an innocent comedy; for as Laurentie observes, “it is necessary to pass through the modern civilization, to fancy that the unmasking of hypocrisy can be a satire upon religion *.” That these men were actuated by a thirst for justice, in making their representations of the society around them is a modern discovery: as in the fifteenth century, the men who stood most in need of reform were probably those who cried out loudest for reformation.

Dante meets one of the troubadours in purgatory. It was the elegant Sordello; and he places another in hell, the warlike Bertram de Born, whom he represents as a bloody and headless trunk, walking with his head in his hands. Robert de Marberolles confesses that he composed his amorous songs, merely because it was the custom of poets; and Pierre de Craon declares that his was an hereditary taste, his family, from father to son, having always made them. One of these old satirists, who railed against every order, not respecting any class, or

* Bibliothèque choisie, Recueil de Fabliaux, introduct.

any individual, however venerable, who visited the monasteries of Clairvaux, and Cluni, for the sole purpose of searching out matter to furnish out his satirical poems, has the good sense and candour to confess that he does not believe that any one will give attention or credit to what he writes.

“ Parce qu’ils ont vu que j’aimoye
 Plus que nul beau soulas et joye
 Et que j’avois aussi grand métier
 Comme nul de moi préchier*.”

Nor is it so certain, after all, that these calumnious wanderers met with great encouragement. The old Trouvère says in the preface to the romance of the Dame de Fayel, and the Sire de Coucy, that poets or trouvères are laughed at by some people, who say, “ qu’il a mal trouvé lui qui na pu trouver un logis.” It does not reflect discredit on the age, when these men, so greedy of money, complain that theirs is a bad profession, and that one may die of hunger, though ever so well provided with scandalous and licentious tales. The jongleurs of the present day have no such complaint to make. Besides, it is a fact, that the works were estimated at the time according to their merits, and denounced accordingly. Gerson, the Chancellor of the University of Paris, endeavoured to have the romance of the Rose declared to be heretical; and alluding to the judgment passed on Ovid’s books by Augustus, he exclaims, “ O heavens! amongst pagans a pagan judge condemns a pagan who wrote a doctrine which enticed men to vain love; and amongst Christians such a work is supported, and praised, and defended.” For this declamation of the moralist, we must make allowance; for the fact was not so. Although that romance was tolerated by some, in consequence of the virtuous interpretations put upon the objectionable passages, yet we find Christine de Lisan, all of whose works breathe so pure and lofty a morality, denouncing it as infamous in her epistles; and saying to her son,

“ Si tu veux et chastement vivre,
 De la Rose ne lis le livre,
 Ne Ovide de l’Art d’Amer
 Dont l’exemple sert a blasmer.”

* L’abbé Massieu Hist. de la Poésie Françoise, 129.

She added, in a prose epistle to Goutier Col, who had undertaken to defend Jehan de Meun, that the romance of the Rose was “une exhortation de très abominables mœurs, et confortoit la vie dissolue.”

The ancient councils, as well as that of Trent, had expressly forbidden the reading of all such books as were calculated to corrupt the manners of men; and it even became a general opinion that such books as the Decameron of Boccacio were essentially heretical, and therefore, on grounds of faith, could not be read by any Catholic who adhered to his profession. Men of the reformed philosophy, while purchasing its early editions at their weight in gold, and multiplying them in a cheap form for the people, were speaking of “the superstition” of those still faithful to the ancient manners, who, on discovering a packet of manuscripts in the house in which Boccacio had inhabited, immediately committed it to the flames*. Under the influence of the Catholic religion, we find princes and noblemen, and philosophers of the lay society, whose names will be for ever associated with the learning of the ancients, speaking with the greatest horror of the classic poets, on account of their obscenity. “What more detestable,” cries Francis Picas, of Mirandula, “than the turpitude of the ancient poets, which should be wholly removed and extirpated from a Christian. I honour and love Christian poets, such as Prudentius, Sedulius, Damasus, and in our age, Baptist the Carmelite, that other hope of Mantua, Ludovicius Pictorius of Ferrara, Ugolinus Verinus of Florence, and many others†.”

It might be questioned whether any scholars in modern times are inspired with the same enthusiasm for the ancient learning, though certainly no one appears to regard with the same suspicion its moral tendency. One can understand how men like the poet Belleau, who always kept company with the profane, on first hearing the peculiar phraseology of the religious innovators, might naturally suppose that what distinguished them was a religious tone of conversation; but this very error seems like a punishment for their former lives, for had they not before associated exclusively with the profane, they would

* Blume, Iter Italicum, II. 90.

† De Studio div. et hum. Philosophiæ, Lib. I. cap. 6.

never have thought chastity of language a mark by which they could detect a Huguenot*. The fact is, that by far the greatest number of the licentious poets of a later period, either avowedly or secretly favoured the religious innovators, and, indeed, were themselves important agents in bringing about that revolution. There is not a little connexion between the gross licentiousness of Chaucer and the looseness of his faith. No one need be told after what kind of justice the early innovators thirsted, when they pillaged shrines, and sought nuns in marriage. Manners, however corrupt, did not interfere with the new character which they assumed, and the old man which they threw off, was not exactly that condemned in the Gospel.

Harrington, the translator of Ariosto, the courtier and godson of Queen Elizabeth, to whom he dedicated his work, so infamously gross, was nevertheless the object of highest admiration with the English of that age. Buchanan was another of these reform-preaching poets, whose verses were often indecent. Clement Marot was abandoned to the vilest licentiousness, while translating the Psalms. John Bouchet, unmasking the vice and hypocrisy of the innovators, expresses the deepest regret that this man should have so fallen by heretical presumption, seeing that “he was a true poet born.” The mocking satires from the shop of Rabelais, were certainly not indicative of the pure and blessed thirst. Des Perieres contributed, at the same time, to the Queen of Navarre’s novels and to the hymns of the Huguenots. We must except, indeed, Grevin, who published a satire upon Pierre Ronsard, for having condemned the innovators in his “Discours des Misères du Tems,” and yet Grevin published many pieces of gallantry little in accordance with the character of a reformer of religion. Even one of the ministers, the Sieur de Mont-Dieu, has the equity to blame Theodore Beza for the amorous fantasies which he formed, and which so enchanted him that they broke forth in his verses†. As for the objects of their calumny, it should be remembered that those immoral censors who attacked the clergy, like Jacquemart, Gelée, and a thousand others, are equally severe upon all other classes of

* Goujet, *Bibliothèq. Françoise*, tom. XII. 296.

† *Ibid. tom. XII. 236.*

men, upon magistrates, nobles and kings; and, besides, what can any historian infer from the clergy having been insulted in a treatise on the art of love? These severe satirists of the monks, were also distinguished by being the bitter calumniators of the female sex, and that is another reason why their whole testimony should be altogether rejected. John de Meun does not believe that there is one virtuous woman in the world.

“*Prudes femmes, par Saint Denis
Autant en est que de Phenix.*”

Lines, methinks, which it would be difficult to match for their absurdity, blasphemy, and falsehood. Nay, he affirms that there never was, and that there never will be a virtuous and chaste woman. After this, it is pleasant to hear him lash the vices of his age, moralizing and accusing the monks, and arguing thus:

“*Tel a robe Religieuse
Doncques il est Religieux!
Cet argument est vitieux.*”

I am aware, indeed, that it is not sufficient to reveal the infamy of such men, in order to be justified in rejecting in general the testimony of the satirists and censors of the ancient Christian society. Fools may speak wisely, what wise men do foolishly; and St. Augustin proposeth the question, “How doth an unjust man praise and blame rightly, many things in the manners of other men? By what rules does he judge? Where are those rules written, unless in the book of that light which is called truth *?” “That book of light,” says Duns Scotus, “is the divine Intelligence; and in that light the unjust man sees what things are done justly, ‘igitur in illa luce videamus à qua imprimitur in cor hominis, justitia illa autem est lux increata†.’”

From such questions and sentences we may infer that the great masters of the middle ages, would have sanctioned the rejection of no evidence, on any ground but that of its intrinsic worthlessness. The existence of such writers, however, is not sufficient proof to justify the modern opinion respecting the state of morality in their time.

* S. August. de Trin. XIV. 15.

† Duns Scoti, Lib. I. Sent. Dist. III. 9. 4.

It was in the reign of St. Louis that the great founders of the immoral satiric school flourished, who, like Richard de l'Ile, Courtois d'Arras, Garin, Haisiaux, Huon le Roi, and Courte-Barbe, supplied, in subsequent times, Boccacio, Villon, and Rabelais, with some of their worst passages. The Abbé Massieu, says, "It is a surprising thing, that there should have never been in France more poets of gallantry, nay, more licentious and immoral poets, than during the reign of the holiest of our kings. Neither the example of the prince, nor the regulations of his kingdom against immorality and disorder, were able to restrain the poets within the bounds of their duty*." To a reflecting mind, on the contrary, nothing is less surprising than the phenomena to which he appeals. It is perfectly in the order of nature, that ages of eminent holiness should be prolific in writers of this description.

It was no novelty to the Christian Church to be presented with such facts. St. Jerome complained of his age, that frivolous authors were most read, and that many preferred the Milesian fables to the books of Plato †.

Yet on the other hand, if these books intended for the amusement of the feudal hall be compared with the compositions which correspond to them in the ancient literature of the Gentiles, or in the modern society, no one, I think, will be tempted to bring them forward in evidence of a peculiar corruption of manners in the middle ages. We can trace no resemblance in them to the calumnious libels which were formerly denounced by human as well as by divine decrees—the Roman law condemning all who wrote or read them, and the Christian emperors publishing many ordinances to the same effect. Certainly many of the chivalrous romances contain objectionable passages, which appear the more dangerous, if we consider what S. Jerome saith, "venena non dantur nisi melle circumlita, et vitia non decipiunt nisi sub specie umbraque virtutum." But yet they indicate no systematic plan to falsify the principles of human conduct, or to reverse the Christian type. They do not appear in the rank of an organized and determined opposition to the spirit and law of the Catholic religion. If the romantic writers contributed to create a taste for all that is wonderful and wild, it must on

* Hist. de la Poësie Françoise, 172.

† S. Hyeronymi Lib. I. Epist. 3, ad Eustachium.

the other hand be acknowledged that theirs was often a most discreet madness; and, after all, the ancient sage who first reduced poetry to art, would not teach us, on that account, to despise them: *τὸ δὲ θαυμαστὸν ἡδὺ*, is the saying of Aristotle*. Speaking of Guillaume de Lorry and Jean de Mehun, Stephen Pasquier says, “Whether you consider their soft sentences, or their beautiful imagery, I would oppose them to all the Italian poets. Do you seek natural or moral philosophy? You find them there. Do you desire wise traits? Do you wish folly? You will find them both there in abundance—traits of folly from which you can learn to be wise. Not even in theology do they seem to be apprentices; and since their time, some have been in great vogue who were enriched with their plumes without confessing it †.” Pindar complains that “fables embellished with various false beauties, *ὑπὲρ τὸν ἀλαθῆ λόγον*, have perhaps deceived the minds of mortals, and poesy, which renders all things sweet to men, superinducing honour, may have often rendered credible what is incredible ‡.” But the moralist judges less severely, and with Novalis says that “it is the poet alone who deserves the name of sage.” Certainly the lay of the minstrel, or the romance of the knightly penman, has often inspired heroism, devoted affection, and thoughts allied with justice, in youthful breasts. Call these authors, if you will, vain, but do not affect to be more severe than St. Jerome, who styles Homer “dulcissime vanus.” You cannot, at least, accuse them of heavy lightness, serious vanity, while of many you might truly affirm that they are pleasant without scurrility, audacious without impudence, learned without opinion, and strange without heresy. What profound views of Providence and the mystery of life in that beautiful fabliaux of the hermit whom an angel leads through the world! What a moral lesson in the destruction of the boy, who, dying in innocence, is received among the angels, while his father returns to that course of charity from which he had been withdrawn by an over solicitude to make a provision for him; and thus both are eventually saved, whereas otherwise both would have been for ever lost! This admirable fable, which Parnel translated, and partially dis-

* Poet. 24.

† Recherches de la France, liv. VII. 3.

‡ Olymp. I.

figured, to render it conformable to the prejudices of his sect, occurs in the *Doctrinal de Sapience* *, composed in the year 1388, by Gui de Roye, Archbishop of Sens. How easy is it again to detect the spirit of Catholicism in the tenderness and delicacy of the passage in the *Inferno*,

“ That day we read no more ;”

so universally admired, and yet to which many parallels might be found in the writings of the middle age, which were intended to amuse the leisure of the bower and hall. If all this be false, still we must grant that it is what Plato calls “ lying well ;” whereas the man of that new lay the inventor, which begins with

“ I want a hero, an uncommon want,”

and generally the writers who have succeeded the ancient Catholic poets in that walk, by traducing the noblest worthies of history, and levelling all views of human life, not merely lie, but lie *οὐ καλῶς*, as Plato says ; publishing things, also, which if ever so true, the ancient moralists would have consigned to silence, or would have only discussed and examined in solemn conclave, before as few and as select hearers as possible †. “ Never would we permit poets,” says Socrates, in a memorable passage, “ to persuade our people that Achilles, being the son of a goddess, and of Peleus, the wisest of men, and the third from Jove, and educated by the most wise Chiron, was full of such confusion that he could have within himself two diseases contrary to each other ἀνελευθερίαν μετὰ φιλοχορηματίας. καὶ αὖτις περιφανίαν θεῶν τε καὶ ἀνθρώπων. We ought not to suffer them to say such things, nor to try to persuade the young, ὡς οἱ ἥρωες ἀνθρώπων οὐδὲν βελτίους, ὅπερ γάρ εἰν τοῖς ἔμπροσθεν ἐλέγομεν, οὐθ' ὅσια ταῦτα οὐτ' ἀληθῆ †.” We have, in these remarkable words of Plato, an exact description of our modern popular literature, which is neither holy nor true. It was given, indeed, to Byron to draw fine tones from an anti-poetic chord in the human heart ; but his imitators among a God-forsaken people have had reason to repent their choice in attempting to follow him. What made poets of old was faith, divine, infinite in its desires, in its sighs and raptures ; human

* *Doctrinale Sapientiae.*

† *Plato de Repub. Lib. II.*

‡ *Ib. Lib. III.*

faith also, which believes in the affections of man, in hope, in hospitality, in patriotism—christian faith, which purifies all, which sanctifies all, which deifies all.

With respect to the censure due to the ancient romances of chivalry, it would be great injustice not to make many distinctions, and acknowledge the many extenuating features which belong to them. A modern writer of that class who speak of “the venerable chroniclers” of the middle ages, when they wish to show that they were men who had no sense of justice or mercy, says, that “while the heroes of the round table are sent in the most devout spirit to search for the Sangreal, we find them recreating themselves from their toils by the most depraved pleasures:” he neglects to inform his reader, in conclusion, that no knight can win the prize, but one who has the purity of an angel, and that one is found, Sir Perceval, who succeeds in the quest. But even without investigation, methinks had these ideal characters been exactly such as this writer represents, Dante, who knew them so well, when he had heard his sage instructor name those dames and knights of antique days, as being among the spirits for ever lost, would never have added, that “overpowered by pity, well nigh in amaze, his mind was lost *.” In general these ancient books are judged from the paraphrases of modern French writers like the Count of Caylus, and how they must have disfigured the old chivalrous romances may be well conceived, when one observes that in their versified translations of Theocritus they have contrived to obliterate, even in him, some expressions of the modesty of nature. Milton says that “the lofty fables and romances which recount in solemn cantos the deeds of knighthood, proved to him, by the price which they set upon chastity, so many incitements to the love and stedfast observation of that virtue †.”

Would you observe what penitence, what a sense of the baseness of sin, occasionally breathes through these pages? Hear the following narrative:—“Courtesy resisted passion in the breast of Gyron le Courtois, as he rode with the Lady of Maloanc, saying to him within his mind, ‘Haa, Gyron! Be not guilty of villainy, and think not to dishonour your friend; take heed how you deserve by your actions, the charge of treason, and of great vil-

* Hell 5.

† An Apology for Smectymnuus.

lainy. For if you should act thus, you will never have honour more.' Nevertheless, he is about to succomb till the falling of his sword into the fountain, causes him to hasten to the brink, when on stooping down to draw it out, his eyes are attracted by the words which were engraven on it : 'Loyaulté pass tout et fausseté honnit tout.' Gyron, who had often read them before, who had been often comforted by them in many adventures, and sorrows, now reads them, as if for the first time, as something new, which speaks to his soul. Immediately struck motionless with a deep sense of the crime he was about to commit, he continued to gaze in silence, and to meditate with a sorrowful countenance. The lady, surprised, came up and asked him what he was thinking of, with such earnestness. ' Of what do I think, lady? Alas! I am thinking how narrowly I have escaped from being for ever dishonoured ; and I feel now that I deserve to die for having harboured the thought within, of treason against my friend ; and I am resolved to take vengeance upon myself. Ah! beautiful sword, thou wert once in the hands of a better knight, when thou wert wielded by thy great Hector le Brun, who on no day of his whole life, had ever a thought of treason ; but I have thought treason, too foul and too villainous, against the most courteous man in the world ;' and with these words, being overcome with an intolerable sense of his own wickedness, he would have plunged the sword into his side, and so rashly destroyed the sinner with the sin, had not the lady fallen upon him, and constrained his arm, till a knight came up, who took away the sword *."

Much, I am aware, remains to be said respecting the vices which desolated society during the ages of faith. Great and beyond all description were the calamities of the city of God, when those two luminaries and immortal columns of the Church, Dominick and Francis came into the world. As the historian of the Minors observes, "the demon having persecuted the infant Church by tyrants, and the more advanced by heretics, endeavoured now to oppress with both the joyful and flourishing Church, afflicting it with horrors on all sides, perils of the sword without, heresies within, and the iniquity of corrupt manners †."

* Gyron le Courtois, F. XLVII.

† Wading apparat. ad Annales Minorum.

With what eyes this corruption was regarded by multitudes at the very time, may be seen in these wondrous annals of the poor; and that the minds of men were equally awake at the period of the subsequent revolution, may be learned in a striking manner, from the third sermon of Lewis of Granada, on the feast of St. Dominick, or from the discourse of John Francis Picus, of Mirandula De reformatis moribus, which he pronounced before Leo the Tenth. "Wilt thou tolerate these monstrous things, O Leo, and wilt thou suffer them?" exclaims this virtuous prince. "Let those who do not observe the laws that are so well placed, feel the force of justice; for it is not by erecting Solomonian temples, or the Julian edifices of our age, that we can defeat the designs of our enemies; but by preserving the living temples of God, in sanctity and justice. There will be nothing to fear, if we only preserve the discipline of our faith, and that holiness of life, by which the world was formerly subdued. This every order, this the consent of all good men, demands and implores."

It is, however, in a future book, in contrast with the beatitude of peace, that we shall be more expressly required to survey the vices of the previous ages. For the present we may freely open our hearts to the gladsome, holy light, and endeavour to repair a deficiency which is to be deplored in most historic monuments, in which an entire order of facts, that, relating to the fulfilment of justice, is excluded to make room for details not in the least more certain, but only perhaps more in accordance with the secret desires of human vanity.

How few have heard of the Count and Countess of Gondi, the benefactors of St. Vincent de Paul, who died the death of the just, after having walked before God all their days, in sanctity! But to what region of the world has not the fame of their unhappy son extended, in consequence of his errors, or his crimes?

Great and glorious deeds were wrought by just men among our ancestors, says Benedict Aretino, though historians, to record them, were wanting. If one man, Leonardo Aretino, had not written those books on the Acts of the Florentines, the virtues of Huguccio Fagiolini, Rufus Castrucci, Guido of Arezzo, King Robert, Mastino, Archbishop of Milan, Count Alberic, Galeazzo of Mantua, Peter Farnese, and Galeazzo Malatesta, would have

perished from the human memory. Judge, then, how many just, holy, and innocent men must have flourished during these ages, of whom we know nothing *.

Who can estimate the multitude of the golden angelic souls, candid, puerile, and at the same time profound, to which the middle ages gave birth, and which passed without observation, or leaving behind in history any vestige or memorial of their transit? It was enough for the just that their death was precious in the sight of God, and that their lot was amongst the saints.

Beautiful and terrible was then the Church, as at all times, according to the wisest poet; beautiful in the splendour of the saints, terrible in the armour of the strong, beautiful in that golden vestment, composed of the variety of the just, terrible in the hand of the mighty ones of Israel; but where is the intelligence that can know, or the tongue that can enumerate the virtues of the holy men who pacifically flourished in the city of God, or who bravely militated in its defence? Only in visions of mysterious joy that did imparadise the soul, have a few men been vouchsafed a momentary glance at the mighty hosts, which in the final judgment we shall see. "Behold!" cried a voice to one thus favoured, "this fair assemblage; stoles of snowy white, how numberless! The city where we dwell, behold! how vast; and these our seats so thronged; few now are wanting here."

CHAPTER II.

WHAT was the state of the public mind and manners generally, during the middle ages, in relation to justice, or conformity to the Divine law? This is the first question, which cannot be reasonably answered, until we have consulted the contemporaneous writers. But ere we proceed

* De præstantia virorum sui ævi Dialog. Antiq. Italiæ IX.

to interrogate them, let us recur to the reflection with which we closed the last chapter, in order that we may have a clear view of the position in which we stand towards the solution of the present problem.

I have said that the annals of nations, and the other monuments of antiquity, transmit the knowledge of only a very small part of the just and sublime souls that have passed upon the earth; and, we may add, that, divided as the world is between those whom error and crime have seduced, the two societies of earth and heaven are in wondrous sort confused and blended together. “We know not,” as St. Augustin says, “the number of the just or of the sons of the Church, that holy mother which may appear sterile upon earth. The number of her happy children is known only to Him who calls the things that are not as those that are*.”

We are not favoured like him, to whom it was said by truth itself, “I will make all my good before thee pass.” If we would not prove traitors in regard to history, this is one of the occasions on which we must be content to believe more than we can see; for, to behold the multitudinous graces which descended upon human minds, through the long lapse of ages which we are reviewing, is a privilege reserved for spirits far otherwise exalted and happy, than any which are still encompassed with the darksome weeds of flesh. It would be a vision of the similitude of divine glory, such as will be on that day when the hearts of Christians shall be revealed, and when the deeds of the right hand that were to the left unknown shall be to the universe proclaimed. Nevertheless, while reason teaches the necessity of waiting for the future revelation of the double mystery of virtue and of crime, it is already possible, in this life, to compare Christian and Catholic manners with those of the ancient world and of the modern society, and to trace the development of that ineffable power which has so richly fructified God’s vineyard†.

In forming a judgment on such a question, I am aware that there is an almost infinite variety in the evidence that might be produced to suit the difference of minds; for each observer, according to his studies and habits of thought, will be disposed to attach a greater importance to

* St. August. Enchirid. cap. 9.

† Ezech. 2.

some one or other of the numerous proofs which may be produced from the history and literature of the ages in review. In general, nothing will be more calculated to win attention and assent than incidental testimonies, with which assuredly no one need be scantily provided, for the only difficulty can be in choosing them out of the mass of evidence which presents itself to the recollection of every one who is conversant with the ancient Christian writings.

I said also that, during the middle ages, the crimes of the unjust were often brought forward for the instruction of men; and every one knows that the statements of holy priests and abbots have been converted by modern writers into formal testimonies, to prove the corruption of past times. Whether these great moralists of the middle ages did not sometimes indulge in rhetorical licence in such pictures, might be a very natural question. The English writers moreover of that epoch, seem to have been peculiarly inclined to censure, and to a spirit of bitter criticism, from which not even such great and worthy men as John of Salisbury were sufficiently exempt. It may be observed also, that the most deplorable pictures of the general depravity, such as we find in the prologue to the Customs of Cluni, and in the first book of the Annals of the Camaldoleses, were given as a kind of introduction to the history of some eminent servants of God, the authors of some wondrous and extensive reformation, or even to serve as a foil to the most eminent virtues existing at the same time, which were so great, as to draw forth that exclamation of an ancient writer: “O golden age of Romuald, which, although it knew not the torments of persecutors, yet wanted not a spontaneous martyrdom! O golden age, which amidst the deserts of mountains and woods, nourished so many citizens of the heavenly Jerusalem*.” But whatever may be thought of these remarks, the most cautious reader must, at all events, admit that it will be allowable to meet arguments founded upon such statements of ancient writers, with the evidence of these writers themselves, from whose parenthetical and other incidental modes of expression one can often collect the most satisfactory of all kinds of testimony, in proof of the eminent

* Annal. Camaldul. Lib. X.

piety and justice of the contemporary generation. Such I conceive to be that remark of St. Augustine, that "rarely was any one found in his time, to blaspheme Christ with his tongue." Such that testimony of St. Gregory Nazianzen, "that a man of pleasure, addicted to licentious habits, was then the object of public scorn and hatred *," which seems repeated by the Norman historians, who speak of the disdain with which so many knights refused to acknowledge William, on account of the illegitimacy of his birth; William of Jumiège expressly recording that on that account he was an object of contempt with the indigenous nobles†. Such that remarkable distinction of Thomas à Kempis, "Et omnes, ni fallor, homines cupiunt esse cum Christo, et ad populum ejus pertinere; sed pauci volunt sequi vitam Christi‡." Such that complaint of Richard of St. Victor, "How many do we see in our days poor in spirit, rejoicing in hope, fervent in charity, abstaining much, and greatly patient; who are nevertheless too tepid in respect of the zeal of souls? Some, as if through humility, not presuming to reprove delinquents; others, lest they should seem to disturb fraternal charity, fearing to remonstrate with sinners§."

From a few such passages as these, the least attentive reader, methinks, can form some idea of the justice and spiritual elevation to which the manners of the middle ages had attained. What philosophic writer could now support his arguments by appealing to the public voice to confirm such assertions as that it would be difficult to find any one who blasphemed Christ; that general scorn and hatred followed a breach of the Christian law; that all men probably wish to be with Christ, and to be of the number of his people; that the multitude is great who practise the precepts of perfection, and who err only through humility and the love of peace? Yet, with a certain allowance made, this could be done at so late a period as the fifteenth century; for that devout philosopher, Marsilius Ficinus, declares that he cannot bring any other accusation against his age, but that of having produced one impious man, the brother of his friend

* Cont. Fornic. 3.

† Hist. Norm. Lib. VII. c. 3.

‡ Epistolæ I.

§ De præparatione animi ad contemplationem, cap. 41.

Oricellario, “ who vomits blasphemies against God, from the same mouth that was made to proclaim his praise.”

To complain idly of the present time, by comparing it with the past, had always been a favourite exercise of moralists.

*“ Utinam veteres mores, veteres parcimoniae
Potius majori honori hic essent quam mores mali!
Nam nunc mores nihil faciunt: quod licet nisi quod lubet? ”*

Such is the complaint in Plautus; but it may be remarked that, during the ages of faith, this propensity of human nature has generally left much less trace of its indulgence, so that this is the only point in which the men of the middle ages resembled the modern race of Gallic land; in all other respects heeding little the present, but in their comparative views of justice, seeming to be without a past, or, in relation to the present earth, a future; and, in fact, they had heard the Church declare in her solemnities, that what the saints of old did not doubt would be, she knew had already been in great measure fulfilled. “ It is a vicious propensity of some men,” says Guibert de Nogent, writing in the eleventh century, “ to vituperate the deeds of the moderns, and magnify past ages. It was right, indeed, to praise the felicity of the ancients, and their vivacity moderated by prudence; but in the estimation of no discreet person, is their secular prosperity in any manner to be preferred to our virtue; for, although a certain merit shone eminently in them, yet in us, upon whom the ends of the world are come, the gift of nature hath not grown torpid. The deeds that were wrought in ancient times, may, indeed, be proclaimed justly for the recreation of men, but much more worthy of being published are those things which are usefully performed by the rude in this old age of the world. If we have heard that God was magnified in the Judaic people, we have known by sure experience that Jesus Christ as yesterday with the ancients, so to-day with the moderns is glorified*.”

Again, what is still more curious, hear what Wandalbert Deacon, a monk of Prumieen, speaking in the ninth century, and saying, in the prologue to his life of St. Goar, addressed to the Abbot Marcuvard, “ Now that studies after many years of prostration in Gall, have been

* Guibert de Novigent. *Gesta Dei per Francos.*

made to flourish again by the liberality of princes, and the wisdom of good men, we should be inexcusable if we did not transmit to posterity the acts of the holy persons which have come to our knowledge. Neither are they to be heard, who ascribe so much to past times, as to deny that any deeds performed at present are worthy of record; for Divine Providence grants to all ages of the world what is fit for the human race in mode and measure, so that it is not right for us to desire the felicity of former men, nor is it credible that if they could have foreseen the state of our times, they would have condemned it; for there are now also in the Church many men of illustrious virtue*."

Will you descend to later times? "This city of Lyons," says Paravin, "although it contains a medley of all nations, can justly claim the title of 'a house of religion,' a 'congregation of brothers,' for there reigns within it a virtue and a union which can only proceed from the grace of God†."

The celebrated Traversari, that holy and learned Ambrose from the Desert of Camaldoli, coming to Bologna in the year 1434, found it a prey to civil dissensions; yet, while lamenting these troubles, which he endeavoured to appease, he hesitated not to say, in a letter to Albert, "Bologna hath men to whom, besides the graces of all humanity, is not wanting the fear of God, and the most profound reverence for religion; so that without regard to the many monasteries of our order which it contains, necessity urges me to love and cherish that city, and to take delight in it‡."

In the epitaph of the blessed Guido, in the convent of Minors at Bologna, which is of the fourteenth century, that city is styled *Civitas sensata*, to express its celebrated learning, which gave rise to the saying, "Bononia docet." Maffæus Veggius ascribes the success of St. Bernardine's preaching at Milan, partly to the character of the inhabitants, whom he describes as a most humane people, most addicted to the divine worship of a sweet and gentle nature, offensive to none, envious of none, always desirous of good, and living together in singular

* Acta Sanct. Ord. S. Benedict. tom. 2.

† Paravin Hist. de Lyon, Lib. III. c. 18.

‡ Annales Camaldulens. Lib. LXII.

benevolence and charity, seeking rather to augment than diminish the honour of strangers; without deceit, without affectation, and after sinning not with difficulty brought to penitence*.” Muratori calls Milan “that beloved city, where still the manners of the golden age may be seen to flourish†.” The holy and learned Sigebert, in the twelfth century, had contracted such an affection and respect for the citizens of Metz, during his residence among them, that he inserted an elaborate panegyric on their city, into his history of Thierri, one of their bishops‡. St. Bonaventura went farther than to praise one city. He used to return thanks to God for having sent him into the world in an age when he could hold converse with the holy men that were then living in the order of Minors§. “If any age can be called golden,” says that religious philosopher Marsilius Ficinus, in his letter to Paul, the physician and astronomer of Middelburg, “unquestionably it is that which produces in greatest number the men of golden souls, whom Plato speaks of; and that such is our age, no one can entertain a doubt, who will examine it with attention||.”

With respect to the moral character of the labouring poor in the middle ages, there are many incidental fragments from which, I conceive, we should be justified in forming a favourable estimate. Such is that passage in the dialogue ascribed to St Anselm, where, after the condition of soldiers and of artisans is shown to be full of peril to the soul, the question is proposed, What say you of husbandmen? which is thus answered by the master, “The majority of them are saved; because they live with simplicity, and feed the people of God with the labour of their hands, and, therefore, are they blessed¶.” You have, in many places, proof of the rustic population being profoundly imbued with a religious spirit, and, consequently, we must infer that the general tenor of its conduct was just and fair. “A circumstance happened in my youth,” says St. Gregory of Tours, “which shows with what reverence and advantage men received bread

* Wadd. an. Min. X.

† In Script. rer. Italic. Præfat.

‡ Hist. Lit. de la Franc. vol. IX.

§ Wadding Annal. tom. IV. an. 1262.

|| Marsil. Ficini Epist. Lib. X.

¶ S. Anselmi Elucidarii Lib. II. cap. 18.

that had been blessed by the hands of a holy priest. A certain priest going on a solitary journey, came in the evening to the hospice of a poor man, who received and lodged him. During the night, the priest rose as usual to say his office, and the man, whom necessity obliged to go into the forest to carry wood, rose very early. According to the custom of rustics, before it was light, he desired his wife to give him some food, which she brought to him; but the man having received it, would not eat it before it had been blessed by the priest, or until he had received eulogies from him*.”

Stephen Pasquier makes an observation which, in the same manner, proves the religious spirit of the age in which he wrote. “There is no more effectual way,” he says, “to make a prince lose the hearts of his people, and deprive him of strength, than by excommunication, seeing that the principal power of every king lies in the devotion and love of his subjects†.” The force of such a passage can be estimated, when we observe its comparative inapplicability to the manners of men in subsequent times.

There is something, again, very striking as incidental evidence, in the plan of history pursued by Alfonso, of Carthagena, with regard to the kings of Spain, who, in relating how each is represented in painting, presents the most striking features of his character in a conspicuous and picturesque manner. Thus Wamba, he says, is painted armed, but wearing a monk’s cowl; another is painted in a pacific vest, though most warlike, because he never warred against the infidels. Alfonso the astrologer, is painted in a long pacific robe, holding a book in his hand, after the manner of learned men. The attachment of those kings to holy priests, is indicated in this manner: King Athanagildus is painted in a pacific garb, having at his side St. Martin, who preached in Gaul, and St. Æmilian. King Leovigildus is painted also in a long pacific habit, and near him stand Leander and Isidore, Spanish archbishops. Suintila the Second, king of the Goths, is painted in a pacific vest, in company with St. Eugenius, archbishop of Toledo. Recensuindus is painted in company with St. Illefonsus. Hermigius is painted in a

* *De gloria Confessorum*, c. 31.

† *Recherches de la Franc.* III. 19.

pacific robe, with the Archbishop Julian Pomerius at his side, a man of renowned life and learning. Veremundus the Second, is painted leaning on a staff, having at his side the Archbishop of Compostello, and another prelate. Ferdinand the First is painted in armour, on horseback, St. James delivering to him the keys of the city of Coimbra, and St. Dominus de Scillos at his side. Alphonso the Seventh is painted seated on his throne, wearing an imperial diadem, having at his side St. Adelelm. Alphonso the Eighth is painted armed, on horseback, and near him stand Constantia, abbess of Huelgas, which convent he founded, and St. Dominic, the father of preachers*. Certainly there is a great distance between this humble mode of writing, so characteristic of the middle ages, and what is called the philosophic majesty of Tacitus. But, on the other hand, who does not perceive that it has a certain kind of merit; for who does not feel that it supplies most decisive evidence as to the predominant character of these men; and if a similar mode of historic representation were adapted in reference to the race of kings who embraced the modern philosophy, and preferred it to the Catholic faith, who would not trust its fidelity? I do not inquire how one ought to paint these princes, or what persons should be placed at their side, certainly it would not be learned abbots and saintly bishops. I do not propose a question, which no one would be, for a moment, at a loss to answer; but I ask, who would not recognize the portrait at the first view, and, however ridiculous might be the association of images, who could doubt their accuracy?

Again, from the general tone of literature, and especially from that of dramatic representations, similar conclusions may be drawn respecting the character of the age to which they belonged. In a former book, we observed the religious tone which distinguished the learning of the middle ages. Here we might appeal to the heroic and noble images of virtue which abound in their popular poems and legends. A French traveller has lately remarked, that the Spaniards, in their ancient comedies, had captivating examples of all the virtues that can be recommended to a people,—loyalty, firmness, justice, and, above all, mercy and goodness; so that one

* Alfons. a Carthagena Reg. Hisp. Anacephalæosis.

could hardly witness them, without feeling a stronger disposition to practise these virtues *. It was the early heresies, as I shall have occasion to show, which infused a contrary spirit into the dramatic pieces of England.

If we proceed to examine the course of historical events, we have evidence of another kind equally satisfactory.

When we find the French nation so indignant at the voluptuous life of Childeric, that merely on that account they drove him from his throne, and gave it to another king, and did not permit him to return till after eight years of exile, when in the year 464 they became appeased—when we find Judicael, the king of Brittany, choosing not to dine at the table of the king of France, for the reason specified by St. Paul, and in order to avoid it going to dine with the chancellor, St. Onen, at whose table were read holy lessons †—when we read of a St. Adalhard in the IXth century, a youth in the palace of the Emperor Lewis, and that when through hatred of King Desiderius, the emperor put away his lawful wife, the daughter of that king, and married another, this young Adalhard, though only a boy, felt such a detestation of that act, that he left the palace, and renounced all the brilliant prospects with which the world presented him ‡, we are led of necessity to believe that amidst the society of those times there was a living sense of virtue, a respect for justice, and an infinite fear of transgressing the Divine law. In general, I must repeat it, the views taken by modern historical writers respecting the manners of the middle ages, are certainly calculated to excite the astonishment of those who have made an exact and conscientious study of that interval. It would be well for historians if they were placed in the circumstances of Homer, who never speaks of the barbarians, for the reason, as Thucydides suggests, “that there was, in his time, no common name to oppose to them ; for he does not speak of Greeks under one name, but only talks of Argives, and Achaeans, and others §.” The age of Louis XIV., or the age of the pseudo reformation,

* Bourgoign, Tableau de l'Espagne, II. 403.

† Lobineau Hist. de Bret. I.

‡ Vita S. Adalhardi Mabill. acta S. Ordinis Bened. Sæc.

were with many writers found epochs of great convenience, to which all other periods of the Church were contrasted as barbarous.

A Catholic historian, than whom no one ever evinced a greater thirst for truth and justice, says that “there never were manners more opposed to those of the primitive church than those which reigned during the tenth century.” Observe, however, that even while drawing a most dark picture of ignorance and barbarism, for the purpose of representing these times, he formally admits that the primitive discipline of the church continued to subsist till the beginning of the tenth century, and that there never were ages of greater piety and fervour; that the most holy and zealous men succeeded in continued order, and that even during the worst time the faith was always pure, the great principles of morality firmly established, and the tradition, not only of sound doctrine, but of manners, preserved. These sentences are contradictory. The latter are incontrovertible; for we have in our hands the writings and the memorials of the tenth century, which prove that no such prodigious and sudden change had taken place. The latter therefore must be submitted to a long interpretation, to free them from the error which arose no doubt in a great measure from the influence of a certain school to which that illustrious historian had been attached, and partly perhaps from that fondness for antithesis, and of systematic divisions, which so often leads the best writers of his country into exaggeration. Chateaubriand says, “if you wish to see the horrors of those ages, read the Councils *.” True: but he would himself be the first to add, if you wish to see their virtue and their justice, read the Councils. It is there you observe with what solicitude provision was made that, as the church prays, the people of God might avoid diabolic contagion †. Nothing can be more injurious again to history than that Pirronism and spirit of singularity to which so many of the modern writers abandon themselves. “I will say, also,” adds Lenglet Du Fresnoy, “that too many reflections produce no less uncertainty in history than too few, as is seen in Varillas, who, carried away by the beauty of some deep specu-

* Discours Hist. tom. III. 420.

† Sund. XVII. after Pentecost.

lations respecting the death of the Prince of Castille, passes over in silence the real circumstances which he had before his eyes in the letters of Peter Martyr, in order to indulge his imagination with these subtle and groundless reflections *." It is an acute remark of Cardan; "ne credas omnes homines tam callidos esse, ut tu es †;" and Lord Bacon makes the same; "Certainly," saith he, "it is an error frequent for men to shoot over, and to suppose deeper ends, and more compass-reaches than are." Moreover, there is a confusion of epochs in the mind of modern writers, who desire to show their knowledge of French history, by speaking of the manners of the ancient "Regime," as if those had been the manners of the middle age, and as if it was the system of the middle ages, which the revolution of the last century overthrew. But the antiquity of this state, dates only from the rise of the modern philosophy, which by diminishing the influence of faith, had led to the secularization, and to the demoralization of society. For when supernatural motives and manners had been banished from life, as relics of a false religion, and of dark ages, there could be nothing reaped but the fruits of a licentious naturalism.

There is again another kind of evidence of which we must take advantage, arising from the numerous institutions which existed in the middle ages, spreading deep and wide roots through the whole social state, and which, like the confraternities of laics, were especially directed to preserve the public morals from whatever could occasion scandal ‡. These, as the Church sings, were the true fraternities which overcame the crimes of the world; and followed Christ, possessing the noble kingdom of heaven.

In Spain the number of communicants in any city, used to be considered, till lately, as the certain basis for calculating its population §. This was the fruit which these associations produced every where.

The Florentines laid the axe at the root, when they established those societies of lay boys, composed of the noble, middle, and poor classes, which Ambrose of Ca-

* L'*histoire justifiée contre les Romans*.

† *Prudentia civilis*, cap. 62.

‡ *Italia Sacra*, tom. IV. 522.

§ Bourgoign, *Tableau de l'Espagne*, vol. III. 171.

maldoli describes in his letter to Pope Eugene. Over each of these divisions, a faithful laic was appointed; a grave religious man, who trained up these pupils in a secular habit, for the service of the Eternal King. "Their manners," says Traversari, "were preserved in innocence; they were taught to avoid vain spectacles and plays; to abstain from light words, to go often to confession and communion, and to exercise their talents in whatever manner their parents might wish. On Sundays and festivals they all assembled in one place, to celebrate the praise of God, and to have recreations of salutary colloquies. After the age of boyhood, they entered a superior class for youths; and again a third was ready to receive them, so that they were trained to justice through all the critical stages of their lives *."

Dante puts the description of the ancient purity of Florence in the mouth of one of the blessed spirits. Truly, the manners of our enlightened cities at present, would be strange matter for an angel's tongue: but what would it be to behold and converse with these first Florentines, whose renown time covers? To see the Ughi, Catilini, Filippi, the Alberichi, Greci, and Ormanni—illustrious citizens, whose origin was a theme for the discourse of a celestial man from the desert, Ambrosius of Camaldoli †.

It is clear also, that the different orders of chivalry contributed, by the internal regulations which they maintained, to preserve or revive the manners of the Catholic faith. With what zeal and solicitude the morals of the Teutonic knights in Prussia, were defended from contaminations, may be seen in all works relating their history. Winrich von Kniprod sent visitors to examine whether there was any thing to be found contrary to honourable and holy life. They were first to admonish them with brotherly love, and then, if that failed, to punish with the strictest impartiality. This virtuous discipline produced the happiest effects upon the citizens also of the different states of Prussia. Wigand says, that soldiers and citizens were all alike maintained in virtuous order, by the example and care of Winrich von Kniprode. "Tenuit milites atque clientes in justitia per suam prudentiam, cives et rusti-

* Annal. Camaldulens. Lib. LXII.

† De originibus Florentinorum civium.

cos, laudabiliter gubernando, viduis et orphanis compa-ciendo *.”

It was ordained by Winrich von Kniprode, in 1352, that in every house of the order which contained as many as twelve knights, there should be two very learned men to instruct and retain them in religion and justice †. In 1382, visitors were again sent throughout Prussia, to examine whether any one belonging to the order was ignorant of the usual prayers of Christians; and if any such were found, they were to be punished ‡.

Again, the ancient writers themselves form another class of witnesses to prove the virtue and justice of the middle ages. What a multitude of just men then succeeded in constant order, by whose converse cheered, the people journeyed on and felt no toil! Their works, it is true, are all but baggage out of date now—books that were written by men of honour, for others like themselves; but the dispersed fragments of these old writers, which we occasionally meet with in the compositions of modern literature, impress us instantly with the idea that we should revere and kiss them, as if the bones and reliques of holy men. “It is not said,” observes Pasquier, beginning to speak of Alain Chartier, “that I have to present you only with the memorable facts which have passed in France. Words and golden sentences of certain men are of no less value §;” and he might have added justly, that in an historical point of view, they merit no less attention.

Finally, from a reference to their legislation, and the principles of government universally received, we derive further evidence of the public sense of justice, which pervaded society during the middle ages.

Joseph Scaliger quotes an ancient saying; “Ex malis moribus bonas leges.” Unquestionably, in respect to the minute regulation of actions, the legislation of the middle ages appears defective, in comparison with our own. But it is easy to account for this. The confessional superseded the criminal law. Moreover the law had not then supreme dignity. The law did not give authority to Churches.

* Voigt. Geschichte Preussens, V. 401.

† Id. V. 100.

‡ V. 390.

§ Recherche de la France, VI. 16.

“ Lex imperatorum non est supra legem Dei sed subter,” say the Decretals *; therefore all interests, purely national, were subordinate to something higher. “ Take away justice,” says St Augustine, “ and what are kingdoms but great dens of robbers † ?”

Bayard used to say, as we are told by the old writers of his life, that all empires, kingdoms, and provinces, without justice, are forests full of brigands. In days of chivalry, therefore, valour, and the most successful deed of arms, was no excuse for an injustice committed against a weaker state. There were not then warriors received into the society of honourable men, to whom the Shakspearian admonition would be applicable: “ Tell him that his sword can never win the honour that he loses.”

No change in the administration of a kingdom during the middle ages, could have rendered it a nest of pirates, in regard to another country, with which it was professedly at peace.

In vain will you search the history of the middle ages, to discover a precedent for the system of intimidation adopted lately by combined states, trusting solely in their superior force, to awe the heroic champions of a just cause by insolent messages in the worst style of Roman oppression.

Before the rise of the new opinions in religion, which broke up the ancient and compact state of Christendom, nations, as well as individuals, had confidence in justice and law; and the most powerful would have shrunk from declaring openly that they held power by the sword. “ That is the worst title of all,” says a writer who saw and deplored the revolution which was taking place in the minds of men, “ and fitter for those hordes of Tartarians than for a commonwealth of Christians. Neither Littleton nor Somme rural, nor jus feudale know any such tenure, whatever may be concluded from the aphorisms of Holland, and the divinity of La Rochelle ‡.” “ Violentia perpetuitatem nescit,” says Giles of Colonna, in the thirteenth century; “ therefore if a king rules by force, his dominion will be short, and the happiness of a king is not

* Ivon. Carnot. Decret. Pars. IV. c. 86.

† De civitate Dei, Lib. IV. 4.

‡ Jerusalem and Babel, 294.

to be placed in any thing transitory, but in what is eternal ; and besides, men who would govern by civil power, are unjust, and not worthy of being kings *." "God chose to die for sin," says Richard of St. Victor ; "in our deliverance God would rather use justice than power ; because the devil is a lover of power, a deserter of justice ; and in this respect men imitate him, who affect power, and hate justice †. Can we trace the operation of these sentiments in the history of the middle ages ? Assuredly we can. The contemporary writers who eulogize William the Conqueror, are careful to assure their readers upon what grounds they do so. "We deem it important," says William of Poictiers, who had been himself a warrior, "to say with the strictest truth, that if William, whose glory we record, which will displease, we hope, none, but prove agreeable to all men both present and future, took possession by force of arms of the principality of Mans as well as of the kingdom of England, it was that he was bound to do so according to the laws of justice ‡." On the otherhand, Orderic Vitalis attests that many nobles followed the example of Gilbert, surnamed the Avoire of St. Valeri, cousin of the Duke of Normandy, to whom he was always faithful, and who was present with him in all his battles in the English war, and who, when the kingdom was pacified, and William established on the throne, in spite of the offer which this prince made him of great possessions in his new estates, returned to Neustria, and refused to participate in any degree in the plunder beyond sea ; "Content with his own wealth," says the historian, "he rejected that of others, and devoutly offered his son, Hugues, to the ecclesiastical discipline in the monastery of Riche §."

The rights of men among Catholic nations were not as a convention of their diplomacy, but as a necessity of their faith ; having for guarantee and for rule, not the balance of power, or the text of protocols, or the will of tyrants, or the caprice of ministers, or the vote of a parliament, but the prescript of justice, the voice of the Holy See, and, as it were, the conscience of mankind. When Henry II. in writing to Louis VII. of France, styled

* Id. II. 1. de regimine principum I. 1. 9. II. 1.

† Sermo in die Paschæ.

‡ Vita Guliel.

§ Hist. Normand. Lib. VI.

St. Thomas “the late archbishop,” that king exclaimed immediately, “and who has deposed him? I who am also a king, cannot depose in my states the least of clerks.” In those days, the experience of the old humanity was still verified, and as Hesiod remarked, “the cause of justice, as far as it was under the influence of human agency, was sure to prevail in the end.”

—— δίκη δ' ὑπὲρ ὕβριος ἴσχει,
ἴετέλος ἐξελθοῦσα *.

“Who is just,” asks Aeschylus, *ἀνάγκας ἄτερ*; “without necessity †?” You have here the sad but true estimate of all ancient governments, prior to the creation of that common, international and domestic law, which the Catholic religion introduced, and which, in later times, has been supplanted by the artificial contrivances of political sophists, who recognized no other principles but expediency and force. Instead of the deep foundation of justice which lay at the bottom of the German empire, in the middle ages, Europe has adopted the new principle emanating from the doctrines of the innovators, of the balance of powers; a sufficient indication of what they deem trustworthy.

Some modern historians have acknowledged the extraordinary character of justice belonging to the ancient governments. “Without doubt,” says Michelet, “St. Louis owed that elevation of mind which places equity above law, in a great measure to the Franciscans and Dominicans with whom he was surrounded †.” King Ferdinand, at his death, appointing Ximenes regent of Spain, assigned as his motive for doing so, the integrity of the man, and the bent of his mind, which was always desiring what was right and just §. We find this character expressly noted on many ecclesiastical tombs of the middle age. Hugo in the twelfth century Abbot of Pontigny, and afterwards Bishop of Auxerre, lies buried in that abbey, with these verses over him :

* Hesiod. Op. et Dies.

† Eumenid. 550.

‡ Hist. de France, II. 612.

§ Wadd. Ann. Minorum, tom. XVI.

“ Hunc à justitiae norma revocare nequibant
 Obsequium, terror, gratia, dona, preces.
 Sola triumphabat virtus pietatis in illo
 Cum post justitiam debuit esse pius *.”

Wherever we trace the spirit of the clergy in the ancient legislations, we find them characterized by this spirit of incorruptible justice, bending only to the charity of the Gospel. Open the code of the Visigoths of Spain. There we read, that laws are not to be enacted for any private advantage, but for the utility of all the citizens †; that law is a rival of the Divinity, a priest of religion, a nurse of justice, and the soul of the whole popular body ‡; that the law must be the same for all, for citizens and peasants, that it must be according to nature, according to the custom of the state, according to place and time, prescribing useful and necessary things §; that all will be better men, and more strongly defended by equity than by arms; that justice should advance first to meet an enemy before the soldier brandishes a javelin ||. You find the same notions prevailing in the thirteenth century. “ All human laws,” says Giles of Colonna, “ should be conformable to natural law, to the common good, and to the particular nations to whom they are applied; they must be just, useful, and congenial to the customs of the country, and to the time.” In the government of every state must be considered the prince, the council, the magistracy, and the people ¶. Here is justice, and no exaggeration, as in the language of the modern sophists, who speak as if there were nothing in a state but the people.

Would you behold these principles in action? Witness the happy state of Ravenna under the sway of Venice, after the rival families of Traversari and Polenta had been subdued. “ Happy city!” cries an old historian, “ than which no state was ever governed with more clemency, or with a more equal dispensation of justice **.” The confessor of Queen Marguerite, wife of St. Louis, relates, in his life of that holy king, that “ one day having stopped at

* Bulæus Hist. Universit. Paris, tom. II.

† Legis Wisigothorum, Lib. I. 3.

‡ Id Lib. tit. II. 2.

§ Lib. I. tit. II. 4.

|| Lib. I. tit. II. 6.

¶ De Regim. Princip. Lib. III. p. 11. c. 16. 26.

** Desid. Spreti de origine Urbis Raven. Lib. I.

Vitry, he went into the cemetery of the parish church, to hear the sermon of brother Lambert, of the order of the preaching friars, and that he sat down at his feet; and that a noise occurring in a neighbouring tavern, he made them cease, and inquired to whom the jurisdiction of the place belonged, not wishing to order any thing against the authors of this noise unless with the ordinary formalities.” The king of the middle ages was thus subject, like the least of the people, to the ordinary magistrate. The severity of Rollo, under whose administration golden bracelets could be suspended from the trees in the forests near Rouen, for three years, without being touched by any one, is ascribed by William of Jumiège not to his desire of displaying power, but to his love for justice, which is taught by the Divine law *. The results in similar instances were certainly not a little remarkable. The continuator of William of Jumiège says, that “Richard of Normandy, styled the father of his country, and particularly of monks, maintained such justice, that labourers used to leave their instruments in the fields without fear of losing them; that if any thing were ever stolen, the count would pay the loser out of his own purse;” and another historian relates that “Gaufrey, the illustrious Count of Poictiers, maintained such an exact dispensation of justice, that during all his time, no traveller or rustic labourer in the kingdom of Aquitaine was ever disturbed; so that these times,” he adds, “might justly be compared to the happiest age of former Christian princes †.” The abbot Alexander says, that “the dangers from robbers to which travellers were exposed in the provinces of Salerno and Amalphi, before the coming of Roger from Sicily, was owing to there having been no government since the death of duke William, who left no legitimate heir. So wise and effective was the succeeding administration under king Roger, that through all parts of his dominions every kind of iniquity was extirpated, and nothing was followed but what had relation to justice and peace, so that the words of the Psalmist seemed fulfilled, ‘Justitia et pax osculata sunt ‡.’”

* Hist. des Normand. Lib. II. cap. 20.

† Fragment. historiæ Monast. Pictarensis apud Martène Thesaur. anecdot. tom. III.

‡ Alex. Abb. de rebus gest. Rogerii, Lib. IV. c. 4.

The historians of Genoa, commemorating the justice and continence of Matthew Maruffus, who commanded the fleet of that republic, relate that “ wherever he was sent to govern, he contrived to impart his own manners to the people, so that the cities committed to him seemed no longer like cities, but like religious communities, full of sanctity. Precious objects might be left on the pavement during the night, and would be touched by no one that passed *.” Bracellio ascribes the grandeur and wealth of Pera and Capha, which had originated in a few miserable cottages, to the admirable administration of the Genoese government, and to the holy and innocent lives of their rulers. Simon Vignosus, general of that republic, having conquered the island of Chio, during the siege of the city issued a decree declaring that “ if any soldier were found trespassing in the vineyards he should be beaten publicly with rods.” Shortly after, some husbandmen caught his own son Francis, a youth, in their enclosures, and without knowing who he was, brought him to his father, whom no prayers could induce to swerve from his decree; so that his son incurred the penalty, and was scourged, having bunches of grapes tied round his neck. When this just man was dying, he bequeathed five hundred pieces of gold to be distributed among the poor maidens of Chio, to serve for their marriage portions, hoping thus to make amends for the misery which the husbandmen had suffered during the war †.

The ideal of kingly power is admirably expressed in many of the inscriptions and monuments of the middle ages: as where the justice of Charles, Duke of Calabria, eldest son of Robert, King of Sicily, whose tomb is in the convent of the Poor Clares at Naples, is represented by the figures of a lamb and a wolf drinking together out of a shell placed beneath his image ‡. Nothing could better represent the power by which the houses of the religious orders were preserved so long.

During the middle ages, laws were not multiplied as they have been subsequently under the dominion of governments styled popular and constitutional. The an-

* Uberti Folietæ clarorum Ligurum elogia Thesaur. antiqu. Italiæ, 1.

† Jacob. Bracellius de claris Genuensibus.

‡ Wad. Ann. Minorum, tom. VII.

cient poet pronounced those times happy under kings and tribunes, which beheld Rome content with one prison *. What would he have thought of later ages, and under the new forms of administration, when the number and excellency of its prisons forms a country's pride ? "I wish," says Heinsius, "that not only our manners, but our laws, of which we have now neither law nor measure, could be brought back to former times. Believe me, it would be easier to live under twelve than under an infinite number of laws †. What need of a Fannian law when manners were simple? who desired a Cæcilian when there was the same cultivation in the country as in the city? who a Julian, when the love of money was not predominant? who a Falcidian, when virtue and honour were considered the best inheritance? who a Scantinian, when men lived chastely, and in the bonds of wedded love? who a Memmian, when detraction and calumny were in horror? The laws of the middle ages were only for this end—"that by fear of them human wickedness might be restrained, and the life of the innocent be safe amidst the wicked ‡." It would seem as if justice was the object for which every thing was sought and done, as is professed in the Socratic line, δικαιοσύνης ἐν ἔνεκα πάντα ζητοῦμεν §. "A prince must not place his happiness in civil power," says Giles of Colonna, "for if he should have that opinion, he will study to train the citizens to nothing but the exercise of arms, and to those things by which he can subdue nations to himself. Therefore, he will lead the citizens not to justice, but to fortitude. Now justice is a greater good than fortitude, therefore the citizens will be led to neglect the greater for the lesser good. Kings should place their felicity in the act of prudence commended by charity; and for the love of God they should govern the nation committed to them according to law and reason, holily and justly. A king is a name of office, for it is his duty to rule and direct the people to its proper end, as the name itself indicates ; and for this reason he must have prudence, without which a man placed in royal dignity will become a tyrant,

* Juv. III.

† Heinsii Orat.

‡ Legis Wisigothorum, Lib. I. tit. II. 5.

§ Plato de Repub. Lib. IV.

under the impression of sensible things, heeding nothing but how he can extort money *.”

The justice which consisted in regarding the public interest was certainly in a remarkable manner predominant in the mind of many rulers and administrators of government during the middle ages. Louis X. Count of Evreux, guarding against the danger of future dissensions, says in his testament that “the last will of a man is well ordered, when he provides for the salvation of his own soul, and for the peace of those whom he leaves heirs of his property †. Catholic annals are full of examples of this maxim being practised by kings, in defiance of all family interests, and personal ambition. “Conrad having no male issue, Eberhard, his brother, was heir to the throne; but the king perceived that he did not possess the ability requisite, nor the manners which could gain the favour of the people; so that when he grew old, being frequently asked to commend him to the people, he always eluded it, and on his death-bed, taking him aside, he spoke as follows, ‘My dear brother, I see, and I have always seen, that you are not favourably accepted by the people, and therefore to avoid causing you affliction, I always kept silence when I was addressed on your behalf; but if you will take counsel now of me, as I trust you will in God, you will not be inglorious. There is, in Saxony, Henry, the husband of Matilda, to whom I know of no one equal in the kingdom. Taking, therefore, the crown and sceptre, travel day and night to him, and place yourself and the kingdom in his hands, and be ye both mindful of my life.’ He did as the king advised, and on his arrival demanded a secret audience of the count. When every one else had withdrawn, he closed the door, took from under his cloak the crown and sceptre, threw himself at his feet, and related what had been said by Conrad. In fine, after a public deliberation, Henry, with consent of the Saxons and Franks, was anointed king, though subsequently, by the evil counsel of Kisilbertus, the unhappy Eberhard forfeited the glory of this noble action with his life ‡.” Ludovicus Pius, himself an emperor, and son of Charlemagne, being made judge

* *De Regim. Princip. I. l. 10. and II. l. 7.*

† *Hist. D'Evreux, 220.*

‡ *Ekkehard de casibus S. Galli cap. 5.*

between Milegast king of the Vultzes, and his subjects, who had deposed him, gave his verdict for the subjects, and for him whom they had chosen in his room. Michelet after relating the instructions of St. Louis to his son, in which he says, that he would prefer seeing his kingdom governed well and loyally, by a Scot from Scotland, rather than ill by his own son, exclaims, "Beautiful and affecting words! It is difficult to read them, without being moved. At the same time the emotion is mingled with reflections on one's self, and with sadness. This purity, this sweetness of soul, this astonishing elevation, to which Christianity raises its hero, who will give them back to us? Certainly, morality is more enlightened at the present day (attend reader, to the general burden of the passage) but is it more powerful? That is a question well calculated to trouble every sincere friend of the moral progress. Who does not thrill with joy on seeing the victory of equality? I only fear, lest in adopting so just a sentiment of his rights, man may have lost something of the sentiment of his duties. The heart sinks when one sees that in this progress of every thing, moral force has not increased. The notion of free will, and of moral responsibility, seems to grow weaker every day *."

Modern literature supplies many of these remarkable testimonies, to the excellence of the ancient Catholic state. Huber, in his Sketches of Spain, says, "that however paradoxical it may sound, there is perhaps no country so well adapted as Spain, where more, perhaps, of the manners, at least of that state, had been preserved than in any other country, to excite wholesome doubts respecting the pompous wisdom of our legislators, and statesmen. Let the material disadvantages belonging to the Spanish state, and people, be ever so much exaggerated, still, he continues, it cannot be denied that they are in a high degree a state; nay, besides what is more remarkable, that this order of things, however it may be called, has created and educated a people and race, which for capability of genuine moral worth, and natural application, is surpassed by no nation in the world, not even by that which presumes to suppose itself at the summit of European civilization †."

* Hist. de France, tom. II. 622.

† p. 25.

Speaking of those who condemn and scorn as barbarous the spirit and manners of the Spaniards, he says, “ such judgments are perfectly worthy of the spirit of our whole civilization.” The last end of our whole industrial representative system, is the production of the greatest possible quantity of material enjoyments, and their distribution amongst the greatest possible number of men. Freedom, knowledge, religion, poesy, are different wheels in the great machine which manufactures pleasure for the people. The people themselves are supposed to stand higher in civilization, in proportion as they have greater and more numerous physical enjoyments. All this has its good, and is matter for development. Only the pride which represents this as the only good, is not good ; and it is allowable to hope in God, that some other object and motive may lie at the foundation of the life of a people, as of an individual, to hope that the vacuity of this system, by degrees may be shown and felt ; and that for the worth of a nation, some other criterion may be proposed and recognized, than the number of yards of satin which it can annually produce.

It is the remark of a modern traveller to the East, that in the age of Guillaume de Champlite, prince of Morea, and Geoffroi de Villardouin, when the feudal system was established in Greece, governments protecting without boasting, both the liberty and the happiness of the people, had far stronger foundations than the interests of parties, or the popular fancies of the day. Accordingly, Feudal Greece lasted two centuries, and it owed its fall to circumstances independent of the established system *. Witness again that republic of Venice, which to the astonishment of all people, maintained itself for twelve centuries, an example of freedom to the human race ; whereas the Spartans and Romans had only preserved theirs during eight, and five hundred years. The Catholic Church, like the Minerva of Æschylus, had warned her favoured people not to change their institutions. “ All will go well,” she said, “ provided the citizens do not introduce innovations into the laws, moved by evil influences ; *αὐτῶν πολιτῶν μὴ πικαινούντων νόμους κακαῖς ἐπιφρόαισι †.*” Catholic free states did not, like the pagan Roman, owe

* Michaud, Correspondance de l’Orient, 124.

† Eumenid. 693.

their steadiness mainly to the subsistence of houses, in which principles and feelings might be transmitted for ages, as an heirloom, from generation to generation. Niebuhr cites the instance of the house of Russel in England; but we may say, that no country was left depending for its happiness upon any member of one family remaining true to the principle which it advocated some hundred years before.

There is profound philosophy, as well as a just historical statement, in a passage of Stephen Pasquier, in which he accounts for the preservation of the state of France, during times of extraordinary danger. “Witness,” he says, “the reign of Charles VI., his madness, the civil wars, the entrance of the English, and how by a great mystery of God, the kingdom was, nevertheless, preserved to Charles VII. his son, and to his posterity. If you ask me the cause of such success, it is easy to gather it if one is versed in the history of France: for in the midst of all these troubles, every one conspired devoutly to maintain the dignity of the Church, and to extirpate errors as well as abuses *.”

The same idea is presented in his great work. “The first race of kings, from Pharamond to Childeric, lasted,” he observes, “336 years. The second 237 years; and the third has maintained itself to our times, the long duration of which, in comparison with the two former, may be thus accounted for. The two first produced magnanimous kings and warriors, but not of equal policy; and this last, along with force and magnanimity, founded institutions of law, and universities, in which theology was taught, which are not little provisions of police, for our preservation †.”

The internal administration of government was similarly characterized by the justice which requires that the happiness of the multitude should not be sacrificed to the interests of a few, under the pretence of constitutional forms. “If kings were not content with the honour of affection from the people,” says Giles of Colonna, “but should require from the nation committed to them other exterior goods, as gold and silver, they would be tyrants,

* Lettres de Pasquier, Liv. X. 6.

† Qui ne sont pas petits traicts de police pour nous conserver. Recherches de la France, Liv. III. c. 13.

for they would then become robbers of the people *.” Accordingly, “neither under the first, nor under the second, nor for a very long time, under the third line of our kings, had we in France,” says Pasquier, “these taxes, aids, and subsidies, which we now see. Under the third race, kings lived on their own domain, or treasure; but for extraordinary expences, they had privileges, as in travelling, they would lodge for a night at a bishop’s palace, or an abbey, which right was exchanged for a sum of money, called, ‘droit de giste.’ The common people, in like manner, were bound to furnish horses or carts, from town to town, which was exchanged also for money, ‘droit de chevauchée.’ On knighting a prince of France, there would be a tax; but besides these extraordinary levies, none were ever made. Subsequently, Philip-le-Bel, by an invention of his own, invited the nobles, clergy, and third estate, to meet in assembly, and bring an offering for the public expences; and as the commons liked such assemblies, as doing them honour, they were more disposed to give money with a good grace. And never was there a general assembly of the three estates of France, without increasing the finances of our kings, to the diminution of those of the people. But when the said king, in defiance of his preceptor, Giles of Colonna, sought to levy taxes by force, the people would not obey; and at Paris, Rome, and Orleans, openly revolted. By degrees, however, the tax was imposed permanently, though the king was obliged to swear that he would employ it only for necessary war, and the defence of the state †. Similarly to the present times, the imposts which the Biscayans pay to the king of Spain, have the name and character of a gratuitous gift ‡.”

But it is not alone from these general views, that we arrive at the desired conclusion, respecting the thirst of the middle ages, and its effects of justice. Our conclusions are not drawn merely from theories and general views. With the iron-clasped, and iron-bound books of those times in our hands, we can point out, and name the men whom we can conceive, and whom, without the Catholic Church, we can only conceive. Of all the great

* De Regim. Princip. I. Lib. I. c. 9.

† Recherches de la France, Lib. II. 7.

‡ Bourgoign, Tableau de l’Espagne, I. 23.

and good, who flourished from their commencement to their close, it would indeed, as we have already observed, be impossible to speak ; for truly, the prophetic view was verified in the friends of God ! “ I will number them, and they shall be multiplied above the sand.” It would be as hard for a mortal tongue to tell of these as, according to Hesiod, it would be to name the sons of Ocean, who are known to the immortal race.

“ It was the desire, however, of the monastic historians,” as William of Jumiège says of himself, “ that the excellent merit of the just, in regard both to the things of this world, and to those of heaven, subsisting happily before the eyes of God, should also subsist usefully in the memory of men.” To tell of deeds above heroic, though in secret done and unrecorded, left through many an age, worthy to have not remained so long unsung, would truly impart the rapture of a celestial music ; though vain would be the attempt, unless we had drunk of that pure stream of Eunœ, gifted with power, to bring remembrance back of every good deed done, whose taste exceedeth all flavours else ; but God, who doth ever establish new examples of virtue in his Church *, leaveth us not in need of such complete and universal retrospects ; and it is enough to tell of some who faithfully represented the ages to which they fell, though, as our limits warn us to speed, I must still prefer general impressions to multiplicity of detail, inviting the reader to contemplate, as it were, the soft illumination diffused over the whole sky of those ages, which are said to have been buried in the shades of night, without suffering his eyes to rest fixedly upon any one particular star.

There is a kind of praise bestowed on individuals, in ancient books, from which, undoubtedly, a judicious reader can infer nothing ; but there are, on the other hand, eulogies of a different description, which can be admitted as historic evidence ; for when Hugo Falcand observes that the virtue and incorruptible faith of Robert, Count of Lorotelli, Symon, Count of Polycastro, and Ebrard, Count of Squillace, were so well known to Maja of Bari, that when conspiring against William, king of Sicily, he felt assured that his own projects could not

* Prayer Fest. of St. Andrew Corsini.

prosper, unless these noblemen were first removed * ; or when the monk of Crowland, speaking of king Henry's death, says of his enemy, " May God spare him, and give him space for penitence, who thus dared to lay sacrilegious hands upon the anointed of the Lord ; a man of such innocence of life, of such patience in adversity, and of such love for God and for the Church † ;" the mind of the most cautious reader acquiesces at once, and experiences an intimate sense of conviction as to the truth of the incidental panegyrics. There is also a mode of praise which, however we may feel inclined to doubt the justice of its application, in a particular instance, proves, at least, what was the mark at which desires ought to have been aimed, according to the general opinion and spirit of the age. Such is the testimony of the old chronicle of Du Guesclin, where speaking of king Charles of France, it adds, who " loved justice and chivalry with such sincerity, that he was a true man, and of holy life, as long as he lived." And such, that of the ancient historian of Bayard, who says, on the death of king Charles VIII. " I believe that God took him to be amongst the blessed, for the good prince was not stained with a single villainous vice ‡ ."

Of direct testimonies, I shall be content with producing but a few ; for where should I end, if I were to adopt the manner of modern writers, in collecting all the attestations of grace, as they heap together all the charges of guilt which can be gathered from ancient books ? Few words will suffice, to show the injustice of that remark, made by an illustrious writer of our time, where speaking of the men whose history we are recording, he says, " they adored at Calvary ; they did not attend at the Sermon on the Mount ;" a striking sentence, no doubt, but certainly it was not so that the contemporary observers described the men around them ; on the contrary, the words of St. Odilo, in allusion to blessed Maiolus, his predecessor in the abbatial dignity of Cluny, corresponded with the common style of praise, bestowed upon all eminent persons, whether laymen or priests, who attracted their attention. " With the poor in spirit," as

* Hugo Falcandi Hist. Sicula Rer. Italic. Script. tom. VII.

† Hist. Croylandensis in Rer. Anglic. Script. tom. I.

‡ Chap. XI.

he says, “they wished to be poor, that they might be enriched by the King of Heaven with a celestial kingdom; with the blessed meek, they studied to become meek, that with them they might possess the land of the living; with the blessed mourners, they desired to lament the negligence of their children, and the dangers of the whole world; that with them all, they might come to the eternal consolation; with those that hungered and thirsted after justice, they studied to associate with that justice, hungering and thirsting after it, that with them they might feast at the celestial banquet, and be satiated with spiritual delights; with the merciful, they studied to be merciful, that with the blessed merciful, they might obtain mercy from the Lord. As far as it was possible for men, by incessant desires, merits, and prayers, they deserved to attain to Divine contemplation, that with the blessed clean of heart, they might be admitted to the vision of God; in order that they might be truly called the children of God, they learned to be pacific, not only to possess their own souls in patience, but also to bring back all that were at variance, to concord and peace. For the sake of justice, they learned to bear persecution, and passions, from the ancient enemy, and from evil men; that blessed on account of suffering for justice, with the patient and the poor in spirit, they might become associates to obtain and possess the kingdom of heaven *.”

Hear how Angelus Gualdensis, a blessed hermit of the thirteenth century, is described. “This man of God,” saith a contemporary, “learned, and acquired, and truly preserved, the beatitudes which our Saviour taught his disciples in the Holy Gospel †.” So interwoven was this ideal of justice with all general notions of religion, that, like the cross, it was expressed in material monuments, and symbolically represented in the very edifices of the middle age. Indeed, so early as in the times of St. Ambrose, if we credit Landulph, the old historian of Milan, the doctrine of the beatitudes was expressed in this manner; for on the stone table, entitled the chrismon of St. Ambrose, in that Church by which the catechumens were instructed in the principles of the faith, there was de-

* Vita S. Maioli Abb. Clun. IV. S. Odilone auct. Bibliothec. Cluniacens. 284.

† Annal. Camaldulens. Lib. XLV.

scribed a circle, within which eight lines were drawn, extending from the centre to the circumference, to signify the eight rules of blessed life, which are in God, who has neither beginning nor ending *. In the year 823, Eigil, abbot of Fulda, constructed on a hill, near that monastery, which was a place of burial for the brethren, a mystic work, to denote, as the ancient historian observes, that we are all one body in Christ, by whom we are sustained with the eight beatitudes preached in the Gospel, and to whom, as to our sole and final mark we tend. This was a little Church, under the title of St. Michael, of which the subterraneous part was supported by one column in the centre, from which arches sprang in all directions; the remainder, which was in the form of an octagon, having eight columns, was terminated at the summit with a pyramidal arch, which was closed with a great stone †. The whole house, being thus supported by one stone, and closed by one,—typical and subtle work, which Candidus, the monk, describes in solemn verse in his metrical life of Eigil. It should be remembered, besides, that those whom the Church has canonized, cannot be excluded from the rank of historical personages; the princes, warriors, statesmen, philosophers, the rich, the poor, the learned, and the simple men of all classes, during the ages of faith, contributed to augment that vast multitude; and as Lewis of Granada says, “all the saints were poor in spirit, all were mild, all were merciful, all were clean of heart, all were pacific, all hungered and thirsted after justice, all mourned and wept for their own and others’ sins; and all suffered persecution for the sake of justice ‡.

If we look to the palaces of princes, we find the court of a Charles V. of France, preserved in such purity of manners, that if the king ever heard of any of the courtiers having a dishonourable connection, however he might have loved him, from that moment he deprived him of all favour, drove him from the court, and would see him no more. Christine de Pisan says, that no book of a pernicious tendency to manners, was suffered to be

* Landulph. Mediolanens. Hist. Liv. I. c. 12. in Muratori Rer. Italic. Scriptor. tom. IV.

† Schannat. Historia Fuldensis, Pars III.

‡ Ludovic. Granatens. de omnibus sanctis concio, I.

within the palace, nor any person to remain whose language was not chaste and innocent *. Accordingly, when this prince resolved that the minority of the future kings of France should expire after their fourteenth year, by his edict from Vincennes in 1374, full of fine reasons and histories, as Pasquier says, he did not fear to appeal publicly to the judgment of men, in confirmation of the fact that all kings, and especially those of France, were from their infancy placed under such good masters for education, that no danger could be anticipated from placing power in their hands at that early age †. Whatever may be thought of the opinion, such an appeal from a just, and wise king, who respected his people, is assuredly remarkable.

At all events, it is not from the history of the middle age, that Milton would be enabled to justify his position, that kings are commonly the worst of men. In a former book we saw kingly power wielded by the blessed meek, and here it presents itself to our view in the hands of the just. Roderic Santius speaks of the early Spanish sovereigns, as if he had known, from having been vouchsafed, like Dante, a vision of paradise, how well is loved in heaven the righteous King. Lo ! he makes them pass before you, and names them : “ Suintilla the 26th king of the Goths, loved of God and men. Alfonso I. the Catholic, dear to God, and to men. Tulgas, the 29th king, Catholic, and full of all goodness, humble, liberal, loving justice, beloved by clergy and people. Alfonso the Chaste, the 9th king after the slaughter of Spain, sober, chaste, pious, and humble. Recaredus, most zealous for the Catholic faith, against the Arians ; one of the best kings of Spain. Alfonso VII. a true lover of justice. Santius III. called the Desired, so holy and innocent, that his premature death at Toledo, was ascribed to the singular love which God had for his soul. Alfonso VIII. the Good, who married Leonora, daughter of Richard, king of England, blessed in his offspring. Ferdinand III. most glorious, most religious king, not so much to be praised, on account of his many victories, as for having, in the splendour of the palace, and at the summit of hu-

* Livre des fais et bonnes meurs du sage Roy Charles V. c. 29.

† Recherches de la France, Liv. II. c. 19.

man honour, feared God, worshipped the Church, and deserted not the place of virtue ; amidst the abundance of riches, and the delights of royal blood, setting his heart not on the increase of his own dominion, but on the propagation of the faith, for which he exposed his life daily to every danger *.”

Such was the renown of King Ferdinand the Saint, and so esteemed was he even by the infidels, that at his death Mohamed Abu Alahmar, the Moorish king of Granada, sent a train of 100 Moorish knights, who were to assist at the funeral, each carrying a lighted taper ; and this grand testimony of respect was repeated by the Moslem monarch, on each anniversary of the death of king Don Ferdinando el Santo, when the 100 knights, with their tapers, took their station round the cataphalque.

There is a beautiful narrative in an ancient chronicle, which places the Christian virtue and continence of a Spanish king in an admirable light. Bartholomew de Neocastro relates that the people of Messana, being delivered from the French, and having invited Peter, king of Arragon, to accept the crown of Sicily, on the expulsion of Charles of Anjou, that prince set out from his states, invoking the name of Jesus Christ, and after a prosperous journey, arrived amidst his new subjects, though being a prudent prince, he still travelled slowly at easy stages, in order to watch the course of events. One evening, coming to a spot on the sea-shore, near Miletus, whence there was a delightful view over the Mediterranean, embracing the islands of Lipari and Stromboli, the place seemed so convenient and delicious, that he resolved to pass the night there. When all were taking their rest, there came to him an old man of horrid mien, and rough garments, who had descended from the rocks of Mount Etna, in order to speak unto him. He warned the king to beware of the Sicilians. The following night, the king being at Casale Santa Lucia, which is only two miles from Miletus, there came to him Machalda Alaymi, wife of the soldier Leontinus, a woman of great beauty, and of martial spirit, who had done great service in the cause of Sicily, delivering it from the French. “ Seigneur,” she said to him, “ I come to be your guest this night, be-

* Roderici Santii Episcop. Palentini Hist. Hispaniae Pars II. et III. apud Hispaniae illustratæ, Francfort MDCCIII.

cause at the last hospice, there was no lodging to be obtained, owing to the multitude of people assembled to welcome you amongst us. I have come to see you, like the other Sicilians. This is a happy day; this to me is a day of consolation and joy, in which the Lord, on account of you hath delivered Sicily from its miseries.” This woman wore armour, and she held in her hand a silver key; there was a certain composition of mystery in her mien, which comprised an air of cunning, as with firm and laughing eyes she gazed upon the prince. The king suddenly rising up, led her, with his attendants, to the place where she should repose, while he intended to have a spot remote for himself. The lady, however, sat down with him, who was unwilling, and the king said to his chief steward, “It is time now to retire to rest;” and this he said, adds the historian, “that she might go away;” but she only staid there the more adhesively. The king then seeing that she chose to stay, tried in another way of courtly ingenuity, to divert her from her unhappy purpose; and he said to her, “Lady, what is it that you fear worst of all things?” She replied, “Lest my husband should fall.” “Lady,” he said again to her, “What is it that you love most of all things?” “What is not mine,” was her subtle reply; still the king wished to endeavour, by honest conversation, to wave her from her design; so having called his knights and domestics, he said to them, “Let us pass the night in familiar discourse, till the hour for proceeding forth;” and he said to the woman, “Lady, do you wish to hear what perhaps you have never heard? the history of my birth, and the chief mystery of my life?” And she said, “Willingly.” Then said the king, “The noble queen, our mother, was daughter of the king of Hungary, and her name was Nicolesia; and our lord father, was the good king James of Arragon. The lady, our mother, told us that the Omnipotent Christ showed prodigies of his power, on the night of our conception. Dreadful thunder, and flames of fire, and sheets of hail broke over Barcelona that night, so that wild beasts fled from the woods, and mountains, and came terrified to the shore. The earth trembled, and the sea roared, and swelled to a fearful height; the citizens filled the courts of the palace, and there came an old man, and said to our lord father, ‘Seigneur, I am a hermit, and my dwelling is on Mount

Serrat; and I have come to you, led by the Good Spirit. I had gone some distance from my cave, to a spot called ‘Saxum vitæ,’ looking for roots of herbs, my accustomed food. And while I remained this night under the rock praying, a voice came to me saying, ‘a wondrous fruit has been conceived.’ And soon after, the priest of the palace came to the queen, our mother, and said, ‘Lady, I left my bed in terror, and entering the chapel, I prostrated myself before the sacred altar;’ and I heard a voice, saying, ‘A lion is conceived, which will be great amongst the people.’ The queen, too, our mother, had a wondrous vision to the same effect. Behold, then, in process of time I was born, and as I grew up, I was trained to sacred worship, and to faith in Christ; and I was taught the art of war; and when I was eighteen years old, I was, by the grace of Christ, united in legitimate marriage to Constantia, moved by whose tears I have now taken up arms, to revenge the death of her father. And see to what casualties of war, and to what perils I have not feared to expose myself. And know, that to her for whose sake I have done this, and to Christ, who is the Giver of grace, I have promised, that as my cause is holy, so shall be my life; nor will I indulge in voluptuous repose, until the tears of my Constantia shall have ceased to flow, and until she shall have obtained full justice in the punishment of traitors, and satisfaction for her father’s death.” After thus saying, he was silent; and the woman replied, “Seigneur, how old are you? And of what age is your wife, whom you love so much? And the king replied, “That he was fifty-three, and the queen thirty-seven years of age.” The woman said no more, but retired, supposing that the king would do the same; but he took up his arms, and roused his men, and prepared to set forth. She then, unwillingly, followed him; but from that hour she became his implacable enemy, and left no stone unturned to estrange her husband from him, and to undermine the stability of his new power. This interview took place on the 2d of October, in the year 1282 *.

The historians of the middle age are ridiculed by the moderns, for having recorded such numberless instances of supernatural agency; but it should be remembered,

* Bartholomæ de Neocastro Historia Sicula, cap. 41. apud Muratori Rer. Italic. Scriptorum, tom. XIII.

that they always evince an intimate conviction, that the great surpassing miracle of their times, was the number of rich men that entered into the kingdom of heaven. If we now descend to lower ranks, we are presented with direct evidence, not only of purity and decorum of manners, but of the most fervent exercise of all the Christian duties. Thus we find St. Theresa, speaking of a very honest merchant at Toledo, named "Martin Ramirer," who led an exemplary life; being sincere and faithful in his commerce, and thinking of augmenting his goods, only in order to perform more works agreeable to God; and elsewhere speaking of another merchant of Toledo, named Alphonso of Avila, who, like the former, being unmarried, was only occupied in assisting prisoners, and performing other good works *.

In addition to these sources, we have likewise a class of documents, consisting in general views of the manners of society in different countries, presented by writers of the middle age, as the result of their personal observations, which are very remarkable.

In the twelfth century, before Frederick openly disputed against the Church, and the names of Guelph and Ghibelline were known, the citizens of Bologna are described as contending with each other only in zeal for virtue. "Friendship was then the boast of youth, nor was that purity of manners affected by the clouds of fleshly concupiscence, which obscure the heart and prevent the serenity of love from being distinguished from the darkness of lust. The fruits of love were then conversations, innocent mirth, and deeds of benevolence; the delight which charmed was to read sweet books, side by side, to labour together, to dissent sometimes from each other without hate,—as when a man debates with himself,—to teach and to learn mutually, to desire the absent with modesty, and to hail the present with joy. This abundance of a loving heart was manifested by the tongue, the eyes, and a thousand graceful motions. Then, in every house, were found honest shame, and continence, and conjugal love, and virtuous sobriety and moderation. The dignity of families did not depend upon riches, which were rare in Italian houses, but on the number and honour of their members. Manners were simple and redolent of the

* Foundation of the Carmelite Monast. of Toledo.

antique world, so that men rose from banquets to study or to business, for which their temperate feast only gave them a greater relish. Liberty was retained and cherished, as part of human good, though sometimes there was more peril in restoring than happiness in possessing it, and to good men liberty was never wanting*.”

Ambrose Leo draws such a picture of the inhabitants of Nola in his age, that he quite transports his reader into a terrestrial paradise, and makes him imagine that he wanders amidst the sweet villas and gardens of that courteous, benign, and hospitable people, “in whose manners are combined,” he says, “the strictest chastity and temperance, with the utmost elegance and refinement. No factions, quarrels, treasons, or murders, ever disturb that serene state, from which no outcast of vicious life, in whom lust or avarice sways reason, is ever seen in any town of Italy. Here men are tillers of the ground, and content with their lot; so that rarely any inhabitant wishes to travel, or lose sight of the city towers, or pass beyond the sound of their bells. Lorenzo Bulino, a youth, was absent with me during three days, and afterwards coming back, when we arrived at the city gate, he jumped from his horse and kissed it, as during the whole journey he continually declared he would do, if God should grant him a happy return†.”

In the great collection of Italian antiquities by Grævius and Burmann, there is a remarkable description of Callipolis, in the Japygian land, and of the manners of that people, given by the celebrated philosopher and most learned physician Antonio Galateo. “Here,” saith he, “men are most pure, most moral, not liars, not rapacious, not seditious, not intemperate, not ambitious, and, what Plato ascribes to maritime cities, not unjust, nor fraudulent, but veracious, faithful, abstemious, contented, charitable; and, notwithstanding the sea and the multitude of mercenary troops, and the influx of foreigners, preserving their integrity and constancy. In peace, mild, tractable, and humane; and of their bravery in war, the Venetians, Spaniards, and French can best speak. The education of boys and young men is liberal and modest.

* Barth. Dulcini de vario Bononiæ statu, Lib. IV. Thesaur. Antiq. Italiæ, VII.

† Ambros. Leonis de Nola, Lib. III. c. 6. Thesaur. Antiq. Ital. tom. IX.

Arrogance and insolence are not found amongst our youth, who are full of love for one another, and benevolence. But what is above all important, the people are not negligent of religion and the divine worship; St. Agatha, patroness of the city, they piously venerate, and what we have such difficulty to persuade the sick to do, these people, whether about to live or die, of their own accord, have constant recourse to the sacraments. The virtue of the women corresponds to these manners; they are chaste, industrious, and obedient. On holidays they stay much at home; on other days they spin. The beauty and exquisite grace of our maidens are only equalled by their modesty. No one sees them at a window; no one ever receives from them a gesture or a look to embolden dishonest thoughts. At thirteen, you will find few unmarried. Good men, and lovers of truth, cannot pass over in silence the virtue of an enemy. The Venetians are not styled most Christian, yet, when they took our city, as true Christians and Italians, they respected the women, and guarded them diligently in the church of St. Agatha; they abstained from slaughter and destruction, and wished to give up their captives. Upon the whole, my Summonti, I know of no city more capable of serving the purposes of a happy life, if one knows how to enjoy it; none more fit for a sweet and tranquil existence. Here are no affairs but domestic, and those not considerable; no tumults but those of the sea and the winds; here are no seditions, no strifes or very rarely, no proud thresholds, no excess of pleasures or of riches to corrupt manners; here is equal justice,—that oft-depicted, long sought and wished for *isovopia*, grateful, as Plato says, to God and men. Here is the image and shadow of that holy city which will be in heaven, and which from heaven to earth has never descended. There is, indeed, between high and low, nobles and people, a certain distance here, but it is such as philosophers, and Plato himself would praise; not too great, not proud, not contumelious, which holy men abominate, so that one should be thirsty and another drunken, one able to touch heaven with his head and another sunk down to the abyss; here is neither servitude nor licence, but a certain moderate equality; there is degree as to race, riches, dignity, magistracy, for absolute equality is the greatest inequality; but as far as justice and freedom require, there is true equality.

Here are few dissensions, few insane clamours, few crimes, few hatreds, no deceits, no prisons; here we live without envy, without ambition, without pride, without injury, without luxury; we have neither superfluities nor distress. Here one lives without fear and in the utmost concord, as in a citadel. There are no taxes. We enjoy a salubrious air, delicious prospects over sea and land: here I live temperately, and enjoy athletic vigour. At the ninth or tenth hour of the night I rise, and employ myself in writing or reading before sun-rise if it be a festival or a vigil, I go to the church of St. Agatha, if it be not, I pray at home. At the first light I walk forth and visit the sick. Then I dine, and afterwards study or receive those who wish to consult me respecting their health. At the twentieth hour I again go forth to visit the sick, and return home at nightfall, where are always some of no deficiency in genius waiting to converse with me, on philosophy, on manners, or on mathematics. Such is the life of your Galateus, such the city which he inhabits*.”

Methinks this picture of the real state of Otranto, can inspire as much delight as that which represents its romantic history. Nor are these general discourses mere panegyrics. Bernardin Gomisius describes the different provinces of Spain, without concealing the peculiar vices of each people. “The Valencians,” saith he, “are of a mercurial and hasty disposition, joyous, and infantine, from abounding so much in the natural goods of life, so that they are said to be mindful neither of the past nor future, being satisfied with the present; whereas the people of Arragon always gloried in the past, and in the fame of their ancestors, despising the present, and preserving untouched their ancient laws. The Catalonians, inhabiting a sterile soil, are solicitous about the future, so as scarcely to think of the present, and, therefore, they are more liberal than the others; so that they almost surpass all other Christians in bounty to the poor of Christ, and in the pomp of divine worship, being truly cheerful givers, and never more joyous than when they can confer benefits; and though voluble and inconstant, often to their own injury, yet they evince with all an admirable

* Ant. Galatei Callipolis descriptio apud Thesaur. Antiq. Italiæ, tom. IX.

goodness, and being corrected by reason and art, they are on that account only the more capable of excellent things; for the youth are removed far from the indulgence of parents, and initiated in the severe principles of the Christian discipline. To these happy effects many things conduce; strict laws rigidly enforced, the exemplary lives of many most grave citizens, models of manners for imitation, and that inherent religion of the state, which impels them to piety and to the exercise of all social virtues, by means of which the mobility of their minds, instead of leading to inconstancy and temerity, reduces them to better fruit of life, to gravity and perseverance*.”

In like manner John Vasaeus, another Spanish historian, expresses his admiration of the frugality and modesty of all the youth of Salamanca, while Don John Guignonio held the office of chancellor†. “I dwelt fifty years in Spain,” says Lucius Marinæus, the Sicilian, “and I never saw an instance of intemperance ‡.” Torquemade speaks of an inhabitant of Salamanca who went to Toledo and returned, having been absent fifteen or twenty days, during which time he had never tasted wine§. The manners of Spain were not then singular in this respect, for in few countries was the race of men numerous, that would have disdained the suitors of Penelope for mixing water with their wine||. It was not till the decline of faith in Germany, that there was a return to the ancient manners ascribed to it by Tacitus, when he says “diem noctemque continuare potando nulli probrum¶.” In the decrees collected by Ives de Chartres, a penance of forty days was imposed on any one who made another drunk, and if accustomed to give such invitations, he was to be deprived of communion **. Charlemagne, by one of his capitularies, had forbidden, under severe penalty, this custom of encouraging others to drink at banquets.

* Bernardini Gomesii de Vita Jacobi I. Arragon. Lib. XII.

† Joan. Vasæi Brugensis Rer. Hispanicarum Chronic. c. 3.

‡ Lucii Marinai de Rebus Hispaniæ, Lib. V.

§ Hexameron d'Anthoine Torquemade, trad. par Chapuis Roma, 1625.

|| Od. I. 110.

¶ De Moribus Germanorum.

** Ivonis Carnot. Decret. Pars XIII. 83.

In France, when intemperance first became common, in the year 1536, the penalty of banishment and the loss of ears was denounced against drunkards, on being convicted four times. Imprisonment, on bread and water, being the punishment for the first offence.

We may close these general observations by remarking that the opinion of the sophists respecting the comparative merit of national manners, where the new opinions were established, and those of Catholic countries, was in general contemptuously rejected by all writers on their side who were raised above the vulgar. "I fled to Italy," says Milton, in answer to the charge of his accuser, "not as to the place of refuge to the profligate, but because I knew and had found before, that it is the retreat of civility and of all polite learning*."

CHAPTER III.

WE cannot proceed further without taking another glance at the interior life of families during the middle ages, in order to ascertain in what degree domestic manners corresponded with the blessed thirst, and what were the fruits of justice which peculiarly distinguished them. Niebuhr says it is exceedingly interesting to catch a glimpse of the every-day transactions of antiquity; and if so grave a writer can find it so, in relation to such details as the business of witnesses at sales in pagan Rome, surely there is nothing in the mere fact of heathenism having been superseded by Christianity, that can render the manners and household economy of the middle ages unworthy of an historian's regard.

"Never, perhaps," says a modern French writer, "was the virtue of domestic life recommended and described with more esteem and charm than during the middle

* Second Defence of the People of England.

ages. It was not merely celebrated by the poets. It is clear, from a crowd of witnesses, that the public thought like the poets, and formed the same judgment respecting these kind of actions*. That exquisite intermingling of philosophy and religion, passion, and domestic fondness, which some pronounce to be the true desideratum of the virtuous mind, and the best earthly consummation of our imperfect nature, forms at least one of the peculiar characteristics of those times. In this respect the manners of the middle age seem to have existed with all their force in Spain, until the entrance of the French spirit in modern times, an epoch which henceforth should be designated as “the slaughter of Spain.”

“The social and domestic life of the Spaniards,” says Huber, “is distinguished by a freshness, and simplicity, and freedom, to a degree beyond, perhaps, what can be found with any other European people. The kind of ease and equality which characterises society, is almost unknown in other lands. In the Tertulla, on the Paseo, on the public walk, the artisan, the merchant, the officer, the civilian, the clergy of every rank, the noble, the marquis, and count, converse with each other on a footing of the most perfect equality. It is worthy of remark,” he continues, “that this equality prevails in an equal degree even among women, who, in other countries, so often discharge the unamiable office of priestesses to the pride of nobility, wealth, office, or title. Nevertheless, from what is here said respecting social freedom and equality, it must not be inferred that there is any confusion of degree, or any indication of individual vanity overstepping the just limits of place and rank in the community. For the most part, the independence of the lower classes has never in Spain the haughty, aggressive, insolent tone which, in France and England, is so often found alternating with cringing servility.”

“We have seen,” says Rubichon, “states presenting sword in hand popular institutions, or what were called such. And what states? those in which the nourishment of the poor is confided to persons to whom the nourishment of horses and dogs would never have been confided. And presenting them to whom? To Spain, Portugal, and Italy, whose pontiffs, sovereigns, and grandees, are ob-

* Guizot, *Cours d'Hist.* tom. IV. 6.

jects of mockery in these foreign states, on account of the simplicity of their manners, and of their familiarity with the lowest of the people and the poor*.”

The Roman satirist describes the insolence with which the rich treated their poorer guests and clients, to whom were always offered food and wine of an inferior quality, and who were not allowed to speak with freedom, as if they were invited to cause mirth to the company†. It was not so in Catholic ages, at the baronial court. Stephen Pasquier, speaking of the singular felicity of the President de Thou, who was born of a noble race, honoured by his king, and no less by the people, says that his table and conversation were generally with the middle classes, and that the moment he came home, he used to lay aside all the grandeur of his state. He never supped from home, and he used to retire to bed at nine o’clock and rise very early, being always his own chamberlain. He used with great simplicity to return from the palace unattended ‡, a custom which would now be termed profaning the dignity of his office, and dragging its insignia through the mire.

Homer represents Telemachus as a model of filial inferiority and obedience, always instantaneously submitting to his father’s nod; and one might suppose that the answer which Dionysius Halicarnassus ascribes to the Horatii, when Tullus desired them to say whether they were willing to fight the Curatii for the defence of their country, had been taken from some monastic or feudal historian. “O, Tullus, if we had power to determine this question for ourselves,” said the eldest, speaking for the rest, “we should answer you without delay; but since our father is still living, without whom we do not think it right to say or do the least thing, οὐδὲ τάλαχιστα λέγειν ἢ πράττειν ἀξιοῦμεν, we must beg a little delay, that we may consult with him §.” Atticus declared, at his mother’s funeral, that he had never been reconciled to her; by which he meant, that he had never given her displeasure so as to require forgiveness. All this seems worthy of the filial piety which was so prominent a feature in

* Du Mécanisme de la Société en France et en Angleterre,
320. † Juv. Sat. V.

‡ Lettres, Lib. VII. 10.

§ Antiquit. Roman. Lib. III. c. 17.

Catholic manners during ages of faith, before men had been taught or encouraged to throw away respect, tradition, forms, and ceremonious duty. "With his father and mother, honouring them as a true Catholic son, he lies here interred," says the epitaph on Martial d'Auvergne*. Octavian de Saint Gelais, shows himself another of these Catholic sons, when expressing his horror on seeing, in a vision, his father's spirit among those that had made shipwreck on the perilous worldly sea.

" Ha que moult fut mon cœur plein de douleur
 Quant j'avisa ce chevaloureux corps.
 Car pour certain c'estoit mon très-cher père,
 Que vy noyé en mondaine misère."

His first impression prompted him to leap into the sea and embrace his father in the waves, but an interior voice forbade him, declaring that there was no remedy†. The extraordinary love which Pope Urban the Fourth evinced for the Cistercian monastery of Notre Dame des Prez, in the diocese of Troyes, was said to have arisen from the circumstance of his mother having been buried within it‡.

Certainly, it speaks much in proof of the filial reverence which prevailed in the middle ages, to observe how many churches and monasteries, the building of which had been commenced by fathers and mothers, were, after their death, completed by the voluntary piety of their children§. Behold a scene represented by Ratpert in his history of St. Gall. Wolfleoz, bishop of Constance, after afflicting Cotzpert, abbot of that monastery, in divers manners, denied to the monks their right of free election; and knowing that their own charters had been burnt, cited them to appear with him before the Emperor Lewis, in whose presence he produced a charter from his own collection, which he ordered to be read; but, through mistake, his minister had brought a different document from what he had intended, so that he produced a charter that had been granted by Charlemagne, in the time of Bishop

* Goujet, Bibliothèque Françoise, tom. X. 40.

† Id. X. 267.

‡ Hist. du diocèse de Troyes, 362.

§ Italia sacra, passim.

John, which was decisive in favour of the monks. This diploma was no sooner opened, than the Emperor recognized the seal of his father, when he immediately raised it to his lips with veneration, and then delivered it to be presented to all who were present, that it might be kissed by every one in sign of honour. After this act of filial reverence, he ordered the charter to be read, and decided in conformity to his father's will *. A contrary spirit was regarded with universal horror. S. Peter Damian writes from the desert, to censure Albert, a great and powerful nobleman of that time, because tidings have reached him that, at the instigation of his wife, he does not treat his own mother with sufficient respect†.

When the Marquis of Cadiz, on entering Ronda, hastened to deliver his unfortunate companions in arms from the dungeons of the fortress, he found many of them almost naked, with irons at their ankles, and having beards reaching to their waists: there were several young men of noble families, who, with filial piety, had surrendered themselves prisoners in place of their fathers. "The benedictions," says Stephen Pasquier, "which we give our children, do not depend only upon a sign of the cross which we make on them, when by that exterior mark we commend them to God; and as for malediction, though we do not curse them, yet still if there be within us any secret evil opinion of them, though it had only a simple colour of justice, it is an unhappy prognostic of their future life ‡." Of the authority of parents and of husbands, a very high sense was certainly entertained, "Fili uxorque qui non venerantur illum, sed æquales se exhibent, quamvis egregie ament, pro monstris tamen habendi sunt," says Cardan §, and Marsilius Ficinus speaks to the same effect in his treatise *De Officiis*, addressed to Cherubin Quarquatio ||. If, however, the expectations of parents were great, it must be confessed, that they were seldom deficient in fulfilling those duties which entitled them to the devotional love and reverence of their children. Pythagoras assigned as chief cause for revering parents, that it is from them men receive the worship of

* Raperti de casibus S. Galli apud Goldast. *Rer. Alleman.*
tom. I.

† Epist. 3. Lib. VIII.

‡ Lettres de Pasquier, Lib. XI. 3.

§ De Sapientia, Lib. II.

|| Epist. Lib. III.

the Deity * ; and though since the latter days of grace, the worship of God has never been depending upon domestic traditions, yet the exact discharge of the religious duties of Christian parents, was regarded, during the middle ages, as justifying a claim to more gratitude than could be due on the ground of having transmitted any secular or material advantage. Thus Charles de Bourgueville, in his researches on the antiquities of Normandy, speaking of his own origin, and of his being born of noble parents, observes, that “ he considers his being received into the society of Christians by baptism, as the most signal favour that was ever bestowed upon him † ;” and Hieronymus Rubeus, the noble and learned physician who wrote the history of Ravenna, seems chiefly grateful to his father, from remembering his custom of leading him frequently, when a boy, to see a venerable blind priest, Antonio Monnetulo, who impressed him with such reverence, that he says, “ I would never have quitted his side if I could have had leave. On feast days, after vespers, this holy man,” saith he, “ used to preach in the convent of the good Jesus at Ravenna, sitting in the middle of the church ; but at home every day he used to exhort those who came to see him, who were not few, to embrace a holy life, as true Christians and Catholics. You would see crowds flocking to converse with him : and I knew another such old man, Crispoldo, at Rome, though not blind, who was always similarly shut up in a blessed little room, where he was constantly either meditating or speaking, or reading, or writing about divine things ‡ .” Nobility itself was preserved and transmitted more by means of parental admonitions than by descent of blood ; for as the old pilgrims would say, “ vie debonnaire, juste et sainte retient l’homme en honneur, sans jamais avoir deshonneur § .” It would have been well for some families in modern times, even in regard to worldly honour, if, as in the palace of Priam, there had been an altar in the centre of the house ! Nothing can be more admirable than the instructions which we find the parents of the middle ages giving to their children.

Hear how Stephen Pasquier writes to his son Peter,

* Jamblich. de Pythagoric. Vita, cap. 8.

† Les Recherches et Antiq. de Normandie.

‡ Hieron. Rubei Hist. Ravennatum, Lib. IX.

§ Le grant Voyage de Jerusalem, CVIII.

who was a young soldier—"Be sober, gentle, affable, and prize the blessing of the poor people. Above all, blaspheme not the name of God. It is a heresy, and a detestable opinion, that oaths and blasphemies become valour, whereas modesty in word and deed is its greatest ornament *." Hear again his counsel to his son Theodore, whom he had educated for the bar : " If you would be a good pleader, be a just and good man ; for you will easily persuade those who believe you to be such ; but if you have an evil reputation, all the eloquence of Cicero and Demosthenes will serve you nothing. Never undertake a cause which you do not believe to be good. Combat for truth, not for victory ; but all this is included in the first qualification. I do not merely wish you to be a just man, I want this justice to be armed with a living force to hurl vice to the earth, to sustain the afflicted poor, to meet fearlessly the efforts of the most powerful, who would abuse their grandeur. Let all courtier-like fear of displeasing the great be far from you ; for though you may offend them for the time, they will afterwards choose you for their advocate, because you faithfully served your clients against them. It is sinning against the Holy Ghost to nourish your clients with false hopes, in order that the cause may be protracted. Perhaps your practice will be less for this, but it will be more secure and more honourable. Let your pleadings be modest in regard to your opponents, but without prevarication. Spare, however, their shame. Be avaricious, not of money, but of honour. Thus conducting yourself, I commit the care of your fortune to God, whom you should implore in all your actions, and he will never leave those who call upon him with a devout heart †."

The letters of that illustrious nobleman and philosopher, John Picus of Mirandula, to his nephew, John Francis, present another admirable picture of the spirit of domestic relations in that age—"It is a folly" he says to him, "not to believe in the Gospel, whose truth is proclaimed by the blood of martyrs, whose prodigies resound on apostolic tongues, which reason confirms, the world attests, the elements proclaim, the demons confess ; but it is a still greater folly if you do not doubt of the truth of the Gospel, and yet live as if you did not doubt that it was false :

* Lettres de Pasquier, Lib. XI. 3.

† Ibid. Lib. IX. 6.

for if it be true that ‘it is hard for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God,’ why should we thirst after riches? If it be true that not the glory which is from men ought to be desired, but that which is from God, why should we hang upon the judgments of men? If what Christ affirms of his future coming be true, why should we fear nothing less than hell, or hope for nothing with less ardour than heaven *?’’ Subsequently we find this virtuous nephew, John Francis, writing to exhort a relation to persevere in conforming his manners to the rule of Christ, and accounting for his giving such admonition on the ground of necessity, of blood, ancient custom, and especial love †.

French writers of the time of Louis XIV. were generally inclined to judge with severity whatever belonged to the middle ages, yet Goujet, speaking of Champier’s work entitled “the testament of an old prince, which, at the end of his days he left to his son, to instruct him how to follow virtue and to fly from sin,” admits that “the precepts are useful and solid, and well calculated to promote piety and the fear of God ‡.” Nor was it merely children who were thus admonished by their parents; all dependents were similarly instructed in the respective duties of their state, and urged to play not the part of idle truants, omitting the sweet benefits of time to clothe their age with angel-like perfection. Thus we read of Francis Borgia passing his youth in the house of his father, the Duke of Gandia, that he was bred up “amongst the domestics in wonderful innocence and piety.” In fact in the castles of the middle age, if you will credit Mar-changy, the pages themselves were often little saints §, while, as at the castle of Vincennes, there were angels in stone carved over the gate. “The Seigneur de Ligny led Bayard home with him,” says an ancient writer, “and in the evening preached to him as if he had been his own son, recommending him to have honour always before his eyes ||.”

Truly beautiful does the fidelity of chivalrous youth appear in the page of history or romance. Every master of a family in the middle ages, had some young man in

* Johan Picus Mirandula Epist. Lib. I.

† Epist. Lib. III.

‡ Bibliothèq. Françoise, tom. X. 217. § Tristan, vol. V.

|| La très joyeuse hystoire du bon Chev. Bayart, chap. 9.

his service who would have rejoiced to shed the last drop of his blood to save him, and who, like Jonathan's armour bearer, would have replied to his summons, “Fac omnia quæ placent animo tuo : perge quo cupis, et ero tecum ubicunque volueris *.” When Gyron le Courtois resolved to proceed on the adventure of the Passiage perilleux, we read that the varlet on hearing the frankness and courtesy with which his lord spoke to him, began to weep abundantly, and said, all in tears, “ Sire, know that my heart tells me, that sooth if you proceed farther you will never return ; that you will either perish there, or you will remain in prison ; but nathless, nothing shall prevent me from going with you. Better die with you, if it be God’s will, than leave you in such guise to save my own life ;” and so saying, he stepped forward and said, “ Sire, since you will not return, according to my advice, I will not leave you this time come to me what may.” Authority in the houses of the middle ages was always venerable. The very term seneschal, is supposed to have implied old knight, so that, as with the Greeks, the word signifying to honour, and to pay respect, was derived immediately from that which denoted old age—*πρεσβεύω* being thus used in the first line of the Eumenides †. Even to those who were merely attached by the bonds of friendship or hospitality, the same lessons and admonitions were considered due. John Francis Picus, of Mirandula, mentions his uncle’s custom of frequently admonishing his friends, exhorting them to a holy life. “ I knew a man” he says, “ who once spoke with him on the subject of manners, and who was so much moved by only two words from him which alluded to the death of Christ as the motive for avoiding sin, that from that hour he renounced the ways of vice, and reformed his whole life and manner ‡.”

Giles of Colonna shows the advantage of having holy books read aloud, in the vulgar idiom, during the repasts of the family. Henry Suso, of the family of the Counts of Mons, who became afterwards a Dominican friar, and an eminent ascetic philosopher, dying in the odour of sanctity at Ulm, in the year 1365, was first excited to serve God with fervour, by hearing the sweet invitations with which eternal wisdom allures a soul to receive her

* 1 Reg. c. 14.

† Æschyl.

‡ In vita ejus.

inestimable treasure, read at the baronial table. Thus the Book of Wisdom used to be read at the banquet of the feudal castle, and, as the present example shows, often to hearers of a true heroic stamp, full of noble enthusiasm for all justice. This youth, not able to contain himself, burst aloud into the following exclamations : “ Oh, I will set myself with all my power to procure this happy wisdom. If I am possessed of it I am the happiest of men. I will desire, I will seek, I will ask for nothing else. She herself invites me. Adieu, all other thoughts and pursuits. I will never cease praying and conjuring, with all the ardour of my soul, this divine wisdom to visit me.” What, think you, must have been the banquet hall of an Ansold, son of Peter, seigneur of Maule, that renowned warrior of the eleventh century, who, as Orderic Vitalis says, was “ almost equal to philosophers in his discourse, who used to frequent the churches, lending an attentive and judicious ear to the sacred sermons, committing to memory the lives of the fathers, which he heard recited, detesting all lying narrations, as well as the authors who changed the word of God, and publicly refuting their wicked sophisms *.”

Perhaps I shall be condemned as fanciful, but I cannot avoid recognizing justice even in that air of melancholy which, as we before observed, encompassed the feudal towers, and left some trace of its action in all the forms and manners of domestic life in the middle ages. It will not surprise me if those who have abandoned Catholic thoughts and manners should receive such a suggestion with disdain ; for in general when they look sadly, it is for want of money ; and those that are sad, like Shakespeare’s young philosopher, betray themselves to every censure worse than drunkards ; but I remark that the blessed St. Francis, who cultivated the cheerful spirit, and the heart’s joy as one of the choicest effects of the soul’s union with God, took care to distinguish it from that disposition which seeks to promote laughter, and he recommended this noble poetic gravity as a defence against the darts of the demon. One who is profoundly versed in the character of the middle ages, might almost suppose that society had then been formed on the views of these later

* Orderic Vital. Lib. V.

philosophers who say, that piety is extinguished in laughter, and that what men call laughter is nothing else but atheism pure : in corroboration of which opinion, the fact undoubtedly may be noticed, that it was always by a laughing generation, and men of Tyrrinthian wit, that the Catholic religion was proscribed. Pause now for a moment, reader, before any of those old portraits. What a look is there ! Do you not read “the soul’s long thirst,” that sadness which Malebranche says is of itself always agreeable * ; that train of thought, too, which is ascribed to Jacques by Shakespeare, when he speaks of “loving to cope him in those fits when he is full of matter ?” Do you not read, in short, the desire of justice in that countenance which so nobly yokes a smiling with a sigh ? May we not again to justice, to the deep sensibility of the middle age, trace that tragic dignity with which even the dwellings of men were then invested ? Love and death had left many marks of their power and of their woe upon the wind-braving towers of the ancestral mansion. You have only to visit any castle of the middle ages, to feel the force of this remark. Witness that of Blois, within the walls of which died Valentine of Milan ; wife of Louis, Count of Blois ; Philip of Orleans, their third son ; Elizabeth of France, daughter of Charles VI., widow of Richard, king of England, and wife of Charles, Count of Blois ; Pierre d’Amboise, bishop of Poictiers, brother of the cardinal ; Laurent Bureau, confessor of Louis XII. ; John de Garnai, chancellor of France under Louis XII. ; Andrew Navagiero, ambassador of Venice ; John of Orleans, of the poison given to him returning from the siege of la Rochelle ; Antoine Bohier, cardinal archbishop of Bourges ; Anne of Orleans, abbess of Fonteverault ; Charlotte, daughter of Francis I. ; the queens Anne of Bretagne and Catherine de Medicis, and the illustrious princes of the house of Guise †.

I enumerate these instances to show how, in general, the houses of our ancestors were historical ; for the king’s palace had no privilege in this respect over the house of any private citizen or gentleman : and if all houses had this solemn aspect in consequence of their being alike ancestral and full of local domestic traditions, from what other cause can it have arisen but the principle of sta-

* Recherche de la vérité, Lib. III.

† Bernier Hist. de Blois, 22.

bility, and regard to paternal remembrances, which assuredly form a part of human justice, and which were so essentially characteristic of Catholic manners? Some long-loved secret marks, a cross, a letter scratched, connected with the memory of a revered parent, might be traced upon these portals. There was something on the face of these grey walls, which a beloved eye in former days had loved to watch ; therefore the towers and pillars were suffered silently to clothe themselves in black, one after the other, like mourners that attended the procession to a grave. The moss-grown battlements seemed to proclaim, that of many successive lords the worm slept in the tomb, spinning there its thread round their humid crowns. At moments men felt a sudden awe at the kind of sepulchral gravity of their solemn gates. Each new generation asked, at intervals, why they wore such a brow amidst the banquet and the song—

“ By day the tourney, and by night
The merry dance, traced fast and light
The masquers quaint, the pageant bright,
The revel loud and long.”

It was, as Michelet would say, that history was in them : ages weighed them down, and, as it were, the hereditary traditional experience of the world’s woe. The material dwelling was thus a symbol of the mind of its inhabitants ; and can you question whether in that particular feature it did not partake of justice ? Look around you, and compare the men who preserve with those who destroy the paternal dwelling, and then judge. No, this opinion is not fanciful : the manners, and even the material monuments of the middle age have a mourning aspect ; but if we before proved that for man it was happy, we might here demonstrate that it was also strictly just to mourn.

With respect to the administration and government of families it should be observed that neither in the original law, nor in the spirit with which it was observed, was there wanting indication of a general and predominant sense of justice. According to the system of primogeniture, the eldest son was possessed rather than a possessor. Duties are imposed upon him : according to the strong expression of the middle ages “ il faut qu’ il serve son fief.” It should be remembered that fiefs were originally given to men of arms, who were bound to defend the

state. When citizens, who had nothing to do with arms, acquired fiefs, kings required that instead of the military service which was due from them, taxes should be raised on all such persons, and hence the exemption of nobles, and the obligation of those that were not noble, to pay taxes. When the military service ceased, rich men sought to obtain letters of nobility, founded on the antiquity of race *, and all the abuses followed, which before the French revolution had brought the feudal institutions into such contempt; but an attentive and impartial consideration of their origin and principle, will go far to exculpate them from the charge of partiality and injustice. Nevertheless, Pasquier, while praising the law of primogeniture, calling it wholly Platonic, and observing that it has brought great profit to the kingdom of France, remarks, that it was not admitted under the first two races of their kings †. At all events, the general spirit of society, in consequence of the ecclesiastical influence, tended to remove whatever was unamiable or unessential in the domestic government, and in the privileges conferred by legislation. Hugo de St. Victor proceeds farther than even the most sincere lover of justice would require. "Does nature" he asks, "thus divide the merits of children? She bestows equally on all whence they can have the means of living. She herself teaches you, O parents, not to divide unequally your patrimony between them; but you should grant to them all an equal inheritance ‡." There was a patriarchal dominion which, in the sweet spirit of Catholic manners, bound all members of a family together by the strongest and most loving ties. What a picture is that which Ambrose Leo gives of Gabriel Mastrilli, a senator of Nola, who was beloved by the clergy and people, whom he had seen in his eightieth year sitting at the head of his table, having seated before him eighty-one persons, all his children, or those sprung from them, whom he made a point of entertaining thus every year, insisting that they should all sit at one table, while he from the end might behold them with delight and gratitude. Among them were senators, knights, judges, priests, one of whom was

* Pasquier Recherches de la France, Lib. II. 17.

† Id. Lib. II. c. 18.

‡ Hugo de St. Victor, Institut. Monasticæ de Bestiis et aliis Rebus, Lib. c. III. 35.

a bishop, monks, physicians, merchants, and one hermit, Bernardine, who had renounced his profession of the law through a love of solitude *.

We have indeed only to open any chronicle of the middle ages, or even any chivalrous romance, to meet with some passage that cannot but charm by the insight which it furnishes into the domestic virtues of the ages of faith. It could not, in fact, have been otherwise, for these virtues were identical with faith. "That the social life is a life of wisdom, we," says St. Augustin, "hold even more than the philosophers; for whence could this city of God find its beginning, or arrive at its appointed end, if it were not for the social life of the saints †?"

At one time the Church is obliged to defend her doctrine against heretics, who would abolish marriage, "*οἶκος μὲν γὰρ ἐκ γένους συνίσταται,*" says Clemens Alexandrinus, "*πόλεις δὲ ἐξ οἴκων.*" "Holy is the generation," he continues, "through which the world subsists, through which are natures, through which are angels, through which are powers, through which are souls, through which are the commandments, through which is the law, through which is the Gospel, through which is the knowledge of God. Without the body, how could the economy of the Church respecting us be accomplished †?" It is an invincible truth, that whatever is anti-catholic, is also anti-social; and, indeed, the general idea arising from the Catholic doctrine of the sanctity of the marriage state, alone explains the secret of manners in the middle age. Confronted with the might and influence of licentious princes, it is here that the morality of the Catholic church appears in all its grandeur, for the passions of bold and powerful men could make no permanent resistance to the ecclesiastical law, which spoke with the calm majesty of eternal justice.

"When Richard the First, duke of Normandy, four years before his death, desired that his second son, Robert, should be made Archbishop of Rouen, having signified his wish to the chapter of that church, he received for answer, that it was impossible to comply with his wishes, in consequence of the illegitimacy of his son's birth, since, by the canonical discipline, he was on that

* Amb. Leonis, de Nola, Lib. III. Thesaur. Antiq. Italic. tom. IX. † De Civitate Dei, Lib. XIX. 5.

‡ Stromat. Lib. III. c. 15. c. 17.

account incapable of being admitted even to orders, or of holding any benefice. This obstacle opened Richard's eyes, and made him discover in his conscience a sin, which the flattery of courtiers would have concealed from him. In order to repair the scandal, the duke and the mother presented themselves humbly in the church, and received the benediction of marriage *.”

In Catholic times, men would not have spoken of the profane uses of common life, for they well knew, without having read the later philosophers, that common life also had a holiness of its own. St. Augustin says, “ You praise God, when you are working in your own affairs ; you praise God when you take food and drink ; you praise him when you are resting in your bed ; you praise him when you sleep †.” “ They also that were married,” as Clemens Alexandrinus says, “ were able to please God, and to give him thanks, thinking how they might be holy in body and spirit ‡.”

The houses of our Catholic ancestors were not like the patrician halls of Rome, where everything was occult and treacherous, nothing frank or sincere. In a former book, I showed that feudal life was compatible with the manners of the blessed meek ; and here, if we briefly investigate it in relation to the beatific thirst, we shall arrive at the conclusion that it was no less capable of being combined with justice, and with the most affectionate obedience to the whole law of God. “ For in limine, there was nothing in the Christian discipline,” as St. Clemens of Alexandria remarks, “ which forbade men to be rich, well *καλῶς πλούτειν* ; but they were only forbidden to be rich unjustly and immeasurably §.” The holy fathers show, not only that property is allowable, but that it is even necessary for the fulfilment of several divine precepts, such as those which command men to feed the hungry, and to make friends of the mammon of injustice, and they remark that Zaccheus, who received our Lord, was himself a son of Abraham ||.

The political disputes which agitate modern society, had all been set at rest by the positive principles of religion during the middle ages. Giles of Colonna proves

* Bernier, Hist. d'Evreux, 80.

† In Psalm. 146.

‡ Stromat. Lib. III. 12.

§ Ib. c. 6.

|| Clemens Alex. Lib. Quis dives Salvetur.

against Plato, that private possessions are of nature and utility *, and that property should not be equally divided among the citizens of a state, as Phaleas proposed †. The blessed doctor shows that it would be contrary to nature, and impossible to render it equal by law; and that if it were possible, such an act would be injurious to the whole state, and to each citizen in particular, and destructive of virtue. He shows that the chief intention of a legislator ought to be, not the equalization of property, as Phaleas maintained, but the repression of concupiscence, which is the root of all evil ‡; that although the thirst for possession is full of sin, and the best state and kingdom that in which the number of the middle rank is the greatest §, still diversity and inequality are essential to a happy society. “Maximam unitatem et æqualitatem,” saith he, “non oportet querere in omnibus rebus: nam si omnia essent æqualia, jam non essent omnia.” “As all goodness cannot be comprised in one species, so there must be admitted diversity in a state. Nor ought there to be that complete uniformity and equality which Socrates and Plato prescribed ||.” Judging only from these words, methinks the philosophers of the thirteenth century were not apprentices in political science. Leaving speculations, however, for practice, one might find subject for a book that would not be void of moral and poetic interest in the domestic manners of the ancient feudal families, such as the counts of Blois, that were at once warriors, poets, pilgrims, crusaders; or those of Champagne, who were encouragers of agriculture and commerce, while they were the patrons of poets, and the protectors of all that were unhappy. The constant residence of these families in their manorial houses, is a feature of the ancient society which should not be overlooked. Perfectly in the spirit of the middle ages, are those lines of Æschylus,

*οἵκοι μένειν χρή τὸν καλῶς εὐδαιμόνα·
καὶ τὸν κακῶς πράσσοντα καὶ τοῦτον μένειν.*

and the line of Euripides might have been inscribed over

* De Regimine Princ. Lib. II. p. 111. c. 56.

† Id. Lib. III. p. 1. c. 7. ‡ III. 1. 18.

§ III. 11. 33. || III. 1. c. 8.

the portal of many an ancestral dwelling, to denote the mind of its inhabitants.

Μακάριος ὅστις εὐτυχῶν οἴκοι μένει.

To discover one advantage resulting from this custom, we have only to remember that hospitality in the middle ages was not a rivalry of vanity, or an account between debtor and creditor, but a religious duty. We discover the grounds of it in the canons. “The priests are to admonish the people,” say the decrees, “never to refuse lodging to a wayfarer*.” The difficulties of travelling in ancient times, before the road-making sons of Vulcan were abroad, *κελευτοποιοὶ παῖδες Ἡφαίστου*, as Æschylus terms them†, rendered this duty more important. St. Gregory of Tours, relates that a daughter of King Chilperic, going into Spain with a company, having travelled eight leagues from Paris, passed the night under a tent‡; and Lupentius, abbot of St. Privatus, is mentioned to have pitched tents on his journey. Hospitality was a duty imposed on the poor as well as on the great. When St. Gregory used to hear of any rustic labourer who was eminent for the practice of hospitality, he assigned to him while he lived some of the church lands, and exempted him from all tribute§. Great protection and encouragement must often have been derived by the poor from the neighbourhood of a rich and well-tenanted house.

In the old charters of Berry, we read how John, founder of the chapel of Bourges, delivered the labourers from being compelled to work fifteen hours a day; and to abolish this cruelty, he ordered that no one should go to work before six o’clock, or continue at it later than six in the summer and five in the winter. These men of power could enforce what was required by the spirit of religion, and realize what was desired by Sir Thomas More in his Utopia, where “he will have no man labour over hard, to be toiled out like a horse.” The loyal servant who composed the joyous and recreative history of the triumph and prowesse of the good knight, without fear and without reproach, the gentle Seigneur de Bayart, sums up his character in these words: “As far as relates

* Ivon. Carnot. Decret. Pars VI. 25.

† Eumenid. 13.

‡ Lib. VI. c. 37.

§ Thomass. de Vet. et Nov. Eccles. discip. III. Lib. I. c. 19.

to the Church, no one was ever found more obedient; in regard to nobility, no one was a better defender; and in relation to the condition of labourers, there never was a man more full of pity and zeal to render assistance*. To illustrate the deeds of these houses, was often a task voluntarily undertaken by religious communities. A book concerning Rudolph, count of Rhinfield, and his illustrious family, was written by the learned and pious Martin Gerbert, abbot of St. Blaise, in the Black Forest, and printed in that monastery.

Attention to the detail of a household, and the duty of maintaining it in conformity to the spirit of the Catholic church, had been inculcated in an early age, by bishops and other ecclesiastical doctors. St. Clemens Alexandrinus had remarked that Plato reproved the life full of Italic and Syracusan tables, in which men were filled twice a day†. To sport with the seasons, to possess what no one else possesses, which is the noblest effort of a luxury that does not descend still lower to seek the glory of a disgusting singularity, entered not into the spirit of magnificence during the middle ages. The hospitality of the baronial hall, or of the princely houses of Italy haunted by the muses, was not designed to rival in its forms that of the court of Burgundy, when Charles the Bold had a banquet service of silver, to the value of fifty thousand marks‡. In a spirit of noble simplicity, wooden or earthen vessels were often placed before the knightly or learned strangers, with as much confidence as, if one can judge by report, a successful speculator in trade of the present day displays before men like himself his golden buffete, enriched perhaps with the spoils of altars.

John Picus, count of Mirandula, gave most of his silver vessels and precious furniture to the poor, though his nephew Francis remarks, that he still preserved some few objects of the ancient splendour for his table, which was always, however, very moderately served§. Angelo Politian, inviting Marsilius Ficinus to visit him at his village of Caregia, at Fiesoli, adds, among other motives, that Picus frequently comes upon him suddenly from his

* La très joyeuse hyst. Prolog. XX.

† Pædagogus, Lib. II. 1.

‡ La Marche Estat. de la Maison du duc de Bourgogne.

§ Vita ejus.

oaks, and leads him out of his retreat to supper, which is always frugal like his own, but sweetened with learned and agreeable conversation*.

“The very word *convivium*,” says Marsilius Ficinus, writing to Bernard Bembo, the Venetian, “shows that it does not consist in eating or drinking together, but in a sweet company; and as for numbers, I agree with Varro, that the guests should be never fewer than the Graces nor more than the nine Muses. No contentious person, or one who easily takes fire, should be admitted. If divine things be mentioned, men should speak with sobriety; but scientific subjects should not be introduced till the table has been removed. We should follow nature in conversation, for in the most exquisite flavours she mixes sweet with acid, lightness with solidity, and so our discourse should be composed of what is useful and of what is sweet. As for filth, it is far more detestable on the tongue than on the person. The rich and unctuous feast of Sardanapalus we abhor, for this is to die together rather than to live together. *Commori potius quam convivere.* We seek an easy freedom, not a servile difficulty. If any one should be surprised at our attaching importance to conviviality, he should remember that not only all the great sages of ancient times practised it, but that Christ, the master of life, frequently assisted and wrought miracles at banquets, which are an occasion of reminding us that the true aliment of man is God†.” Nor were such just views confined to philosophers. The wealth of Uberto Spinula, to whose pacific virtues the Genoese owed more than to the labours of many heroes, was immense, yet nothing was ever found in his house but what bespoke the utmost moderation, and what would now be styled rusticity‡. On every ground, how much better was it to resemble thus the old and elegant humanity of Greece, than the barbaric pride of a Hunish or Norwegian stateliness? The justice of our Catholic ancestors in all household discipline, would have found eloquent admirers in the writers of Greece and Rome. “I love the ancient state of Lacedæmon,” says St. Clemens Alexandrinus, “on account of its aversion for luxury§. I

* Politian Epist. Lib. IX.

† Marsil. Ficin. Epist. Lib. III.

‡ Uberti Folietæ clarorum Ligurum elogia.

§ Pædagogus, Lib. II. c. 10.

admire Plato," he says, again, "for legislating against splendid furniture, and for saying that one should never possess silver or gold, or any useless vessel, or such as was not required by necessary wants. The having much, *η πολυκτημοσύνη*, should be taken away." Arguing against this domestic splendour of the ancient heathen civilization, he shows the absurdity of not having domestic utensils merely for use, in the same manner as the implements of husbandry and of other arts, which are never inlaid with ivory or gold. "Every thing," he says, "of this kind should be formed for use, not for pride and display; every object should be in harmony with the Christian institutes, and, as it were, a symbol of the happy life. Thus, let the device on rings be a dove, or a fish, or a ship in full sail, or a harp such as Polycrates used, or a ship's anchor. Diomede," he observes, "used to sleep upon the hide of an ox for his couch, and Ulysses repaired the tottering of his bed with a stone. Such frugality and dexterity in self assistance were not only in private men, but also in the rulers of the ancient Greeks*." In the middle ages, there was not that multitude which is found at present of men whose whole lives are devoted to the support and transport of bodies, to provide for the luxury of the table, and of the equipage.

The rich, in the middle ages, whatever might have been their faults, were, at least, often men of active and simple habits, who would soon have decided in favour of the first of the alternatives, comprised in the words of Æschylus; *ὅρθὸν η κατηρεφῆ πόδα* †; they loved not to conceal their feet in a chariot.

"Nobles," says Giles of Colonna, "are industrious, and more active than other men, in consequence of their bodies being well trained, and rendered supple by exercise in youth; and also from the conversation and society of others; for having many observers they become men meditative, subtle investigators of what ought to be done, in order to be laudable ‡."

From this remark, it is clear that the thirteenth century beheld not that race of men who, like the Turks of high rank, are considered more or less of importance, in proportion as they make little use of their legs, and arms,

* Id. Lib. II. c. 9.

† Eumenid. 294.

‡ De Regim. Princ. IV. 1. 5.

voice, or understanding, being surrounded with menials, to whom a sign is sufficient. The ancient nobility would say with Shakspeare,

“ There be some sports are painful, but their labour
Delight in them sets off; some kinds of baseness
Are nobly undergone *.”

Again, the justice of the ages of faith, being called into action, in all the domestic relations, the condition of servants became very different from what it must generally be, where the supernatural principles do not exist. The swineherd in the *Odysssey*, indeed says, that he could not be more favoured than in his old master's house, nor even if he were to return to the house of his father and mother, where he first lived, and who themselves nourished him †. But when these Homeric manners were united generally with the sentiments of Christian faith, the happy condition of domestics was not confined to a few favoured instances ; the Church made express provision for securing it. “ Let a lord, who hath a Christian servant, love him as a son, and as a brother, on account of the communion of faith, though he be still his servant.” This is what the constitutions called apostolical prescribe ‡.

“ It is as much advantageous to the domestic,” says Giles of Colonna, “ to serve his master, as it is to the master to be served by his domestic. For the master supplies example and instruction to his servant, while his servant owes corporeal service to his master ; and so essential to a house is authority, that the poor are obliged to have something in place of a servant, which can serve and obey them §.” Even such writers as Cardan, were sensible of this reciprocal obligation ; and we find him, accordingly, composing treatises on the manner in which masters of families should instruct their domestics ||. In the work of Raban Maur, *De Institutione Clericorum*, it is said, that “ Servants are to be admonished to regard the humility of their condition, and masters to be reminded that they are of the same nature with their servants. The one are

* *Tempest*, III. I.

† *Od. XIV.* 140.

‡ *Lib. IV. c. 11.*

§ *De Regim. Prin. Lib. II. P. III. c. 56.*

|| *Hieron. Card. de Libris Propriis.*

to be admonished, that they may know themselves to be servants of their masters, and the other to be taught that they may know themselves to be fellow servants of their servants *." In like manner, John of Salisbury shows the respect and affection due to servants; that is, he adds, to our fellow servants †; and Marsilius Ficinus, writing to a prince of the Church, urges him to remember constantly that his servants are men, and in origin his equals, whom he should therefore, bind to himself by affection, and not by fear ‡. "Do you know whence this poor domestic comes, who might have so much to suffer from your haughty humour? He returns to your house from the Divine banquet, where great and low are received alike. He returns, attended by the respect of angels; he carries within his bosom, the God who will be your judge." "Whoever observes closely," says Gerbet, "the character of Christian nations, will have no difficulty in distinguishing this secret, but continued action of faith, in the Real Presence. It is to this that we owe, at least, in part, one of the most beautiful traits of our manners, the dignity of domestics, of which the nations who have rejected unity, seem to have lost even the idea §."

On the other hand, the principles of faith, and the example of their masters, wrought such a revolution in the manners of servants, that no one could apply Homer's sentence to them any longer, and say, "that by the mere fact of their social condition, there was proof that they must, as men, have lost half their virtue." Orestes, in Æschylus, in laying his plan for taking vengeance on Ægistheus, says, "that he and Pylades, like strangers, in a coarse and way-worn garb, will knock at the gate; and that the servants, as it is a villainous house, will not receive them cheerfully, but will suffer them to stand there excluded, as they first stood, without the gates ||." In modern times, to heroic youths, however noble in mien, if their appearance, in regard to dress, be such, every house will, in this respect, be the palace of Ægis-

* Rabani Mauri, *De Institutione Clericorum*, Lib. III. 37.

† *De Nugis Curialium*, Lib. VIII. cap. 13.

‡ *Epist. Lib. V.*

§ Gerbet, *Considérations sur le dogme génératuer de la piété Catholique*, 173.

|| Æschyl. *Choëphoræ*.

theus ; but during the feudal ages, the nobility of a family could be collected from the humility and courtesy of its domestics ; who were more inclined to transgress justice, by an unwarranted liberality in the dispensation of their master's bounty, than by insulting the poor, or the humble stranger, who presented himself as a guest. So eminent, indeed, was the justice of the Catholic manners, in relation to servants, that holy men affirmed, in consequence, that there was no condition happier than that of a servant, or more to be desired as favourable to salvation. It afforded a multitude of occasions for good, and very few for evil conduct. It was a state especially happy for those who desired to observe the two fundamental precepts of Christianity, humility and obedience *. A Florentine, who visited the desert of Camaldoli, might have recognized there in the person of brother Michael, a blessed hermit, the servant who had filled the goblet for him at the banquets of Lorenzo de Medici. This holy man had lived for many years with Lorenzo, at Florence, amongst his other domestics, discharging the office of butler ; when, being attracted by the conversation of the learned and religious guests, who frequented the palace, he began to feel an ardour for instruction, and procured himself books. He used to listen with infinite delight, to the long conversations held at his master's table, by the illustrious men who sat there, discoursing on the hopes of heavenly good, and on true Christian charity ; so that afterwards, when he attended Lorenzo to the chase, through the deep woods of the Trebian Villa, on the mountain of Senarius, he called to mind the warning of the Marquis Guido, when one night, deserted in a similar place by his companions, he was admonished by a horrible vision to amend his life, so that he afterwards built seven monasteries. All this so moved him, that his wishes became known, and Lorenzo enabled him to embrace the ecclesiastical state. Subsequently, having accompanied Lorenzo on his visit to the sacred desert of Camaldoli, he was so pleased with all he witnessed there, that he finally became a hermit, and there closed a life of great innocence and sanctity, in that Divine solitude †. Many similar instances might be found in the middle ages.

* *Les Domestiques Chrétiens*, Paris.

† *Annales Camaldulens. Lib. LXXI.*

Cardinal Cibo, whose servant, Lewis Stefunelli, died at Rome in the odour of sanctity, addressed a most affecting discourse to his domestics, which is still extant. He treated them as his children, and his house became a model of order and piety. Gobet, styled Saint Lewis, who was a servant, composed a book of instruction for persons of his condition, which is most remarkable for the piety and excellence of its rules, as well as for the amusing simplicity of the style. “The advice doth not please me,” says Montaigne, “to speak always in the language of a master to one’s servants, without play, without familiarity. It is injurian and unjust, to set so great a value upon such and such prerogatives of fortune; and the discipline in which there is the least apparent disparity between servants and masters, seems to me to be the most equitable.” Christine de Pisan says, “that king Charles V. often discovered the destructive courses taken by some of his servants, and knew of others, who followed various ways of perdition, as frequenting taverns, and bad company, houses of gambling, and other dissolutions; but the gentle king, who, after the example of Jesus Christ, preferred recalling and correcting his people by sweetness, to adopting a method of severity, used to give them advice courteously, and admonish them; and by his kindness, used to lead them back to the right road *”

Petrarch loved his poor fisherman at Vaucluse, and speaks affectingly of his death, in a letter to the two Cardinals of Taillerand, and Bologna. “Yesterday, I lost the guardian of my retreat; he was not unknown to you; he cultivated for me a few acres of very bad land. That rustic man, whom I can never lament as he deserves, had more prudence, and even urbanity, than is often to be found in cities; and besides this, he was the most faithful creature that the earth ever produced; to him I confided my books, and all that was most dear to me. I was absent three years from Vaucluse; at my return, nothing was wanting, not a single thing displaced. He could not read, but he loved letters. When I gave a book to his care, he expressed great joy, and pressed it to his breast with a sigh; sometimes he named the author in a whisper. I have spent fifteen years with him, and confided to him my most secret thoughts; and his breast

* *Vie du sage Roi*, chap. 25.

was to me the temple of faith and love. He died yesterday, asking continually for me, and calling upon God. His death affects me extremely."

In the cemetery of St. Nicholas, in the town of St. Maur-des-Fossès, Lebeuf describes the tomb of a servant which had been erected by his master, in testimony of the love which he bore to him *. In fact, many servants of the middle ages, in consequence of their fidelity, have become historic personages, as Guillaume, Babouin, who afforded such consolation to his master, John, the fifth duke of Brittany, when in the barbarous hands of the Count de Penthièvre, by contriving to speak to him, and give him money, on his various removals from prison to prison †. The Spanish nobles used to keep in their pay, not only their own superannuated servants, and their families, but also those of their fathers, and those of the house which came to them by inheritance. The duke of Arcos, who died in 1780, entertained thus 3000 persons. Notwithstanding this magnificence, clothed with the veil of charity, which is complained of by the modern sophists, there are, as Bourgoign remarks, "fewer great houses ruined in Spain, than in any other country." The simplicity of their manners, their little taste for an habitual ostentation, the rareness of sumptuous repasts, serve as safeguards to their finances; though, when occasion requires, they are surpassed in splendour by the potentates of no country. The ambition of great families tended not to the corruption, but to the ornament of the state; as may be witnessed in those vast towers of Bologna of which one, the family of the Asinelli, the other that of the Garisendi, built in rivalry of each other's houses, which conjoined ‡; to which a similar instance is found at Ravenna, where the towers of Pusterula and Alidosia were so called, from the noble families of those names, to whose houses they were attached §.

What Pericles said in praise of the Athenians, might, in general, be justly applied to the men of the middle ages; "they had taste with simplicity ||." Magnificence

* Tom. V. 163. † Lobineau, Hist. de Bret. Lib. IX.

‡ Dulcini de var. Bononiæ statu, Lib. III.

§ Desid. Spreti de origine urbis Raven. Lib. I. Thesaur. Antiq. Ital.

|| Thucyd. Lib. II. 40.

was reserved for extraordinary occasions ; and then used in honour of religion, as when the Roman ladies put on their diamonds only on the great festivals. Generally, the ancient idea of splendour had nothing in common with the spirit of an age, which can form no conception of any thing important without show and costliness in the materials. From the public festivities, of which we find the details in history, we can infer what was the kind of magnificence which distinguished, more or less, the houses of the great, on occasions of domestic rejoicing ; for it was the same taste which presided over both. Witness, then, the description of the entry of king Henry II. into Lyons, which is so minutely described by Paradin. “ Here we behold, indeed, almost incredible splendour ; but it is not a mere barbarous display of abused riches. What chiefly excites admiration in the beholders, are things which remind no one of the orphan’s tear, or the hunger of the poor ; they are spiritual emblems, the symbolic imagery, the noble inscriptions, the spectacle of natural loveliness, or of youthful dexterity and strength, the wreaths of flowers, the fair troop of comely pages, representing the successive stages of youth, from childhood to maturity, the heroic and inspiring games *.”

We have seen elsewhere, how conformable to these principles, which belong to justice, was the whole internal economy of life with our Catholic ancestors. The most sumptuous castle of a feudal baron, would be now deemed not a fitting residence for one of our bankers. We read, indeed, of the “ false forest of a well-hung room,” and we can still, in many houses, mark the lesson on the carved panels, as in the hotel of Cluny, at Paris, where the credo in action is represented by imagery, showing the grounds of faith, from the creation of the world till its consummation in the celestial Jerusalem, of which two angels record the beatitudes ; but we find not those closets of a splendour merely luxurious, which provoked the indignation of Boyle, who observes, that the “ apostle who discountenanced women’s wearing of gold, or precious things upon their bodies, would sure have opposed their having more sumptuous ornaments upon their walls.” If our ancestors could hear their descendants complaining of their not having understood the art

* Hist. de Lyon, Liv. III. c. 27.

of comfort, that poor Scipio knew not how to live, they might, perhaps, make a prophet's reply, “*væ qui consuunt pulvillo sub omni cubito manus, et faciunt cervicalia sub capite universæ ætatis* *.” Ferdinand IV. of Spain, was educated by his holy mother, Maria, in such poverty, that in order to give to the poor, and to build Churches, and to resist the infidels, they had no silver vessels on their table, but only wooden, and earthen †. When king Alfonso had recovered Toledo from the Moors, perceiving that the manners of the people had become soft and effeminate, through intercourse with the infidels, he took away the baths of Toledo, and all the provisions for pleasure, which the Moors had established there; and so endeavoured to recall the people to their ancient virtue and severity ‡. Modern historians would only conclude from this fact, that the Moors possessed the advantages of a high civilization, and the Catholic king, the rudeness of a barbarous race; but so would not have thought Tacitus, who censures the baths, and sumptuous banquets which the Britons had learned to use from the Romans, adding, “*idque apud imperitos humanitas vocabatur cum pars servitutis esset* §.”

When Thomas Egeworth entered Rochederrieu, after the battle, he found his prisoner, Charles of Blois, placed on a bed, having received eighteen wounds. Exasperated at his refusal, in such a state, to deliver himself to him, he commanded that the bed should be removed, and straw substituted. Charles felt the advantage, at that moment, of having been educated as a Catholic prince. Giving thanks to God, he declared that it was the same to him, and he vowed that in future he would never again lie couched upon luxurious plumes ||.

Who is not astonished, on reading of the magnificent and pious works of Cosmo de Medicis? “How many Churches and monasteries hath he built and repaired?” says Benedict Aretino. “With what beautiful edifices hath he adorned our city? No man ever before supported so many poor people as he hath, with his own riches. And it can scarcely be told with what parsimony

* Ezech. XIII.

† Roderici Santii Hist. Hispanic. Pars. IV. c. 8.

‡ Lucii Marinei Siculi de Reb. Hispaniæ, Lib. VII.

§ De vita Agricolæ. || Lobineau Hist. de Bret. VII.

and religion he governs his own house. It is worth while to see him and his virtuous sons, walk through the streets without pomp, without servants, and simply clad ; so that strangers would suppose they were common men *.”

“The ancients,” says Huber, “are praised for having confined their magnificence to the temples of religion, while their own dwellings were but miserable huts. This is still more or less the case in Spain. The dwelling-house, the whole system of private life, bespeak poverty. The Churches, convents, hospitals, and palaces of justice are superb ; an unquestionable proof of barbarism,” he adds, ironically, “according to our views of civilization †.”

With some men, it is sufficient to read that article of provision, in the charter of privilege, granted to the Seigneur of Sassey, which declares that his right of lodging comprises stables for his horses, and perches for his birds ‡, or to see on the walls of the Castle of Blois, the figure of a hind, carved there by order of Louis XII. to commemorate an animal, which had been taken in the forest, whose history in verse is inscribed below the figure, to feel impelled to declaim against the interminable and destructive amusements of the feudal nobility, as legitimate ground for denying the existence of domestic justice, during the middle ages : but on such occasions, it should be remembered, that if the practice were often defective, it was not so with regard to principles, which agreed with those of Aristotle and Anacharsis, who say, “that to take pains, and to labour for the sake of play, was silly and too boyish ; but that to play in order to take pains and labour, was just and right §.” Not to remain on ground which we have before gone over, it may be only observed here, that the writers of the middle age were even more severe against hunters than would seem tolerable, if we did not bear in mind, what was the sense of justice continually in their minds. According to their reading, men are hunters, not before, but against the Lord, according to the sense attached to the word *avar-tioν*, by St. Augustine ||.

* De præstantia Virorum sui ævi Dia'log.

† Skizzen aus. Spanien. XXIII. ‡ Hist. d'Evreux.

§ Ethic. Nicom. Lib. X. c. 6.

|| De Civitate Dei, Lib. XVI. 4.

"Men see a hunter, and are delighted," says Ives de Chartres. "Woe to them wretched," he adds, "if they be not corrected." "Qui enim vident venatorem et delectantur, videbunt Salvatorem et contristabuntur*", words which might excite surprise, if we did not remember the hunting of such men, as the tyrant Eccelino, that enemy of the human race†, and James of Sant Andrea, whom Dante found in hell, among the prodigal, who set fire to a cottage, in order to warm himself and his friends, after hunting on a cold winter's day, and then gave three acres of land, and money sufficient to build three houses to the peasant whom he had injured ‡. Grievous and loud were the complaints of the clergy, on the subject of those "qui propter venationes et amorem canum causam pauperum negligunt §." Frequently, however, they found an echo in the knightly breast.

There are the charters of the counts and countesses of Blois, declaring, as in that dated in the year 1298, that for the remedy of their souls and of those of their fathers, and desiring to provide for the good of the country, they will keep no game, excepting within certain determined woods, and that whatever animal is found without those parts, whether stag or boar, or hare, or whatever sort of beast or wild bird, may be hunted and killed by any one, whether he be noble or not noble, without his being called to give any account. The inhabitants of the country may take these beasts or birds, either with dogs or traps, or in whatever manner they like, and at whatever hour of the day or night they may choose||. A count of Spanheim, in 1454, might have been seen feeding daily thirty poor men at his table, for the soul of his father, Count Walram, who lay buried in the church of Spanheim, whose punishment after death, for having injured the property of the peasants in the hunting, which was his sole pleasure, had been revealed to Godrid the chaplain, as he walked by night across the plain between Winterberg

* Iponis Carnot. Decret. Pars XIII. 32.

† Chronic. Rolandini IX. 14.

‡ Bernardini Scardeonii hist. Patavinæ, Lib. III. 13.

§ Ionæ Aurelianensis, Episcop. de Institut. Laïcali, Lib. II. cap. 23. apud Dacher. Spicileg. tom. I.

|| Bernier Hist. de Blois, Preuves XXVIII.

and Pferdfeld, by sounds and visions from the forest, so dreadful that he never smiled again*.

In a former book, some excuse was offered for the passion which men of the middle ages evinced for the chase. Many of the old popular sayings, show that the condition of the country rendered it in some sense a service of public utility. Pasquier cites many such as, "when one speaks of the wolf, one sees the trace;" "go not to the woods when the wolves eat one another;" "necessity drives the wolf from the woods;" "while the dog cries the wolf flies;" "he who makes himself a lamb, the wolf will devour him;" "the hour between dog and wolf," to denote twilight, when a wolf might be mistaken for a dog†.

St. Hubert gave a kind of sanctity to the chace of forests, and it cannot be denied but that the exercises of the declining year, leading men to consort with the solemn beauties of mourning nature, must have had a beneficial influence on the mind. Many fine moral instructions would have been lost, methinks, to men who had not known what it was to hold lonely converse with the withered fern and ragged furze stretched o'er the stony heath, to mark all the changes on the mountain's side which give note of the declining year, to see the falling leaves blown wildly across their path, to tread the thick strewn glades, and to traverse the watery rushy wastes, hearing amidst the lurid gleam of nocturnal exhalations, the lengthened notes of the northern birds who sing there, as Olaus Magnus supposes, through cold and hunger‡. It is an historical fact, that many hunters of the middle ages ascribed their conversion to an early familiarity with the woods, to their habit of wandering amidst twilight groves and solemn wastes, when the leaf incessant rustled, slowly circling through the air, or descending in wild showers from the boughs before the rising storm; but whatever may be thought of the passion which our feudal ancestors evinced for the chace, I know not on what ground their descendants can presume to criticize and condemn them.

* Chronic. Hirsaugiens.

† Pasquier Recherches de la Franc. Lib. VIII. 15.

‡ Olai Magni Hist. gent. Lib. XIX. 7.

Round their Cycloian hearths *, within the sea-washed tower, or the dusky hall, deep in forest wilds, the long narrations of the hunter to companions, who

“ Hear, half asleep, the rising storm.
Hurling the hail and sleeted rain
Against the casement’s tinkling pane,”

may perhaps indicate, in the estimation of some persons, a state of society truly barbarous. Certainly, our ancestors, like Virgil’s husbandmen, enjoyed the winter’s tale.

“ Mutuaque inter se læti convivia curant,
Invitat genialis hiems, curasque resolvit†.”

It is amusing to read of the strange knight in the forest, who wishes to force his story upon Gyron le Courtois, who only consents to listen to it, to prevent the other from engaging in a mortal combat with him on the spot. The *ὕμνων θησαυρὸς*, of which Pindar speaks, might have been found in every feudal tower, where undoubtedly discourse in general was more wild, youthful and credulous, than would suit the formal sagacity which resides within our luxurious cottages; but, let it be remembered, that the odious vices of the conversations which the principles of faith do not guide, were not found so frequently there. Our ancestors had been made familiar with the saying of St. Jerome, who, condemning detraction, says, that “we should love the houses of all Christians as our own‡.” Religion’s voice had determined not only the doctrines of intelligence, but also the details of practice. It is recorded in the epitaph on the tomb of Claude Albert d’Arbois, seigneur de Romeny, which is in the church of Lusarches, in the diocese of Paris, a hero renowned for his probity and valour, that his hatred for calumnious remarks was carried so far, that he was styled at court, “The protector of the absent§.” Their very recreations were known to be a part of justice. “Not every pleasant is an idle word,” says Giles of Colonna; “for an idle word is that which wants a due end, but recreation is liberal and necessary; therefore, words tending to it,

* Iph. in Taur. 836.

† Georg. I. 301.

‡ Epist. XXXIV.

§ Lebeuf. Hist. du Diocèse de Paris, tom. IV. 326.

have a due end and are not idle, for as sleep is necessary for the wearied body, so is play for the fatigued mind *.” A stranger and guest did not enter a feudal hall with the certainty of being received with distasteful looks and cold-moving nods that would freeze him into silence.

It is related of Schiller that, in society, the strict ceremonial cramped the play of his mind. “Hemmed in,” says the writer of his life, “as by invisible fences, among the intricate barriers of etiquette, so feeble, so inviolable, he felt constrained and helpless; alternately chagrined and indignant.” Now this evil, which every one above the vulgar must experience more or less, was wholly excluded from the society of the middle ages; for manners were then playful, unreserved and free. Men did not, indeed, set open their gates to the invaders of most of their time; they were hospitable, but they did not, as Cowley says, “expose their lives to a quotidian ague of frigid impertinences, which make a wise man tremble to think of.” We have only to examine the division and structure of their habitations, to see how they had means at least afforded to them, between their massive walls, for that solitary and silent meditation on the divine law, which, in the divine scriptures, is synonymous with justice.

It may be remarked in history, that when the head of the house was unworthy, there is generally incidental, and often direct evidence of the redeeming qualities of its other members. There is no name associated with shame or terror, which the virtues of women have not in some way or other rescued from unmixed aversion. Among the poor Clares in the convent of Majorca, in the year 1260, you would have found a sister, Magdelin Bonaparte, renouncing even the legitimate pleasures of the world, to serve God with perfect, undivided love†.

If the old chronicles of Switzerland describe the crimes of the seigneurs of Sargans and of Watz, chiefs of a powerful family in the Rhetian Alps, in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, who used to make war against the abbots of St. Gall, they do not leave us in ignorance of the virtues of the women of that noble house, which were enough to have rendered its name immortal.

* De Regim. Princip. II. 1. 30.

† Wadding Annal. Minorum.

Listen, now, to a simple tale of the 13th century, which is recorded in the annals of the Franciscan order. Two friars of Paris, travelling in the depth of winter, came at the first hour of the night, fatigued, covered with mud, and wet with rain, to the gate of a house where they hoped to receive hospitality, not knowing that it belonged to a knight who hated all friars, and who for twenty years had never made his confession. The mother of the family replied to their petition, "I know not, good fathers, what to do. If I admit you under our roof, I fear my husband; and if I send you away cruelly in this tempestuous night, I shall dread the indignation of God. Enter, and hide yourselves till my husband returns from hunting, and has supped, for then I shall be able to supply you secretly with what is needful." Shortly the husband returns, sups joyfully, but perceiving that his wife is sad, desires to know the cause. She replies that she dares not disclose it. Pressed and encouraged, she at length relates what has happened, adding, that she fears God's judgment, seeing that his servants are afflicted with cold and hunger, while they are feasting at their ease. The knight becoming more gentle, orders them to be led forth from their hiding-place, and to be supplied with food. The poor friars come forth, and draw near the fire, and when he sees their emaciated faces, humid raiment, and their feet stained with blood, the hand of the Lord is upon him, and from a lion he becomes a lamb; with his own hands he washes their feet, places the table, and prepares their beds, bringing in fresh straw. After the supper, with altered look and tone, he addresses the elder friar, and asks whether a shameless sinner, who hath not confessed since many years, can hope for pardon from God? "Yea, in sooth," replied the friar, "hope in the Lord, and do good, and he will deal with thee according to his mercy; for, in whatever day the sinner repents, he will remember his iniquity no more." The contrite host declares that he will not then defer any longer approaching the sacraments. "This very night," saith he, "I will unburden my conscience, lest my soul should be required of me." The friar, however, little suspecting danger of death, advised him to wait till morning. All retired to rest, but, during the night, the friar became alarmed, rose, prostrated himself on the earth, and besought God to spare the sinner. In the

morning, however, the master of the house was found dead. The man of God, judging from what had passed, consoled the widow, declared that in his dreams he had been assured of the salvation of her husband; and the man was buried honourably, bells were tolled, and mass was sung, and the friars departed on their way*.

It is to instances of this kind that St. Jerome alludes in his beautiful epistle to Læta, where he says, "A holy and faithful family must needs sanctify its infidel chief. That man cannot be far from entering upon the career of faith, who is surrounded by sons and grandsons enlightened by the faith. For my part, I think that Jupiter himself, if he had lived in the midst of such relations, could not have been prevented from believing in Jesus Christ. Let your illustrious father, if he pleaseth, turn my letter to ridicule; let him tax me with folly. He will do nothing but what his son-in-law did also, some time before his conversion. Christians are not formed by birth, but by grace†."

We meet with frequent instances in the history of the middle ages of whole families being composed of saints, for even among persons who had not formally retired into cloisters, the perfect life was often found. "O happy house," cries St. Jerome, writing to Chromatius and Eusebius, brothers, who lived with their friend Jovinus, and their mother and sisters, who were nuns, all under one roof; "O happy house, in which dwell Anna the widow, virgins, prophetesses, and two Samuels nourished in the temple ‡."

"At Dijon," says St. Gregory of Tours, "there was a certain senator by name Hilary, who had a wife and many sons, who maintained his house in such chastity and purity, that men beheld there the fulfilment of what the apostle says, 'Honorabile connubium et thorus immaculatus.' Master and servants, all shone with equal purity. So he died. Who and what he was, according to the dignity of the world, may be seen at this day on his immense tomb, which is of marble sculptured §."

Under the roof of Alphonso de Cepede and Beatrice d'Ahumade, the parents of S. Theresa, each member of

* Wadding Ann. Minorum, tom. V. an. 1281.

† S. Hieron. Epist. ad Lætam. ‡ Epist. VII.

§ De gloria Confessorum, 43.

that numerous household of children and servants endeavoured to give the rest an example of perfect piety. That certain image of sincerity and love of truth which, in the estimation of Muratori, so amply compensated for the inelegant style of Donizo, whom he grants may be called a barbarous and iron writer, appears in no part of his metrical Life of Mathilda more strikingly than in the verses which describe the dukes of Tuscany and Spoleto as brave Catholic men begetting Catholic sons.

*Justitiæ palmam gestabant semper et arma
Temporibus quorum viguit pax ordoque morum,
Catholici fortes genuerunt Catholicosque.
Clavigeri Petri normam sancti quoque cleri
Semper amaverunt, coluerunt, et timuerunt,
Ex propriis rebus sanctis hi multa dederunt
Escas, et vestes miseris tribuere libenter*.*

What families were those which produced St. Bernard and St. Benedict ! What sweet and wide-spreading influences of saintly affections must have existed between their different members ! What dialogues between a brother and a sister—a Benedict and a Scolastica ! Mystic conversations approved of heaven, canonized in the tempest of that awful night which heard the last of them, and which from the memory of man shall never perish ! What holy families are brought to light by the annals of the Franciscans alone, which incidentally speak of the relations of different members of that order ! St. Clare had a mother, Hortulana, and two sisters, the blessed Agnes and Beatrice, who all followed her example. The blessed king, Boleslaus the chaste, had a mother, the blessed Grimislava, and a sister, the blessed Salomea, and for his wife the blessed Cunegond, who had two sisters, the blessed Constance, Duchess of Russia, and the blessed Jolenta, who, after the death of her husband Boleslaus, the pious Duke of Calissa, gave all she had to the poor, and retired into the convent of Clares, which he had founded. What roots of living virtue are here spreading far and wide ! Ezelinus, Count Palatine of the Rhine brother of St. Cunegond, and of Theoderic, Bishop of Metz, whom the Emperor Henry, unable to conquer by force of arms, subdued by kindness, had ten children,

* Lib. I. cap. I. Rer. Italic. Script. tom. V.

of whom all but one son and one daughter, who remained with great honour in the world, became eminent in religion, two as archbishops, and six as abbesses *.

There are few historical works of the middle ages which do not furnish similar instances. Hangericus was an illustrious man, major domo to Theodoric, King of the Burgundians. He had four children by his wife, Leode gunda : St. Pharo, at first a soldier, then a clerk, then a monk in Resbach, and lastly Bishop of Meaux ; St. Canoaldus, his brother, from a child was a monk in Luxeuil, under father Columban, and afterwards became a bishop. St. Phara, their sister, consecrated her virginity to God ; and their brother, Count St. Walbert, who inherited the paternal possessions, and who used often to repair to the blessed Bertin, at St. Omer, to hear the word of God, and to receive his blessing, at length renounced the world, and became a monk at Luxeuil, and upon the death of his brother, the blessed Pharo, succeeded him in the see of Meaux ; his son again, St. Bertin, lived a holy life at St. Omer, under the holy Bertin, who had baptized him, and made a blessed end †.

The family of queen St. Etheldrite, abbess of Ely, furnishes an instance from our annals, for her father, king Anna, was of eminent justice, making himself equal to his servants through humility, lowly to priests, grateful to the people, devout to God, the father of orphans, the judge of widows, and the brave defender of his country, whose sepulchre was revered as that of a saint ; and her mother, Hereswetha, who was the sister of St. Hilda, shone in the glory of sanctity ; of her two brothers, Jurminus was a blessed man, and her three sisters, for the love of Jesus Christ, deserved to have oil in their lamps among the prudent, one of whom, Sexburga, succeeded her as Abbess of Ely ‡. In the twelfth century, we find a Wido, Count of Matiscon, with his wife, sons, and daughters, and also thirty soldiers, probably of his household, coming to Cluni, where they all embrace a religious life §. In the eleventh century, Seliger Von Wollhausen was a

* Annal. Hirsaugiensis.

† Chronic. Monasterii S. Bertini, cap. I. Pars X. apud Marten. Thesaur. anecdotorum, tom. III.

‡ Acta Sanct. Ord. S. Bened. tom. II.

§ Chronicum Cluniacens.

valiant knight and renowned warrior. In his beloved and pious wife, Hedwig, and in his three sons, with his ample fortune and high renown, he possessed all means of earthly happiness. But the holy church, he thought, required his services; he renounced the world, its joys, and its honours, and retired to the monks of Einsiedelen, his three sons following him, and his wife taking the veil in the convent of our Lady, at Zurich *. Here could have been no sudden change, and therefore one can estimate what must have been the interior life of these families during previous times. Bruno the Benedictine, one of the apostles of Prussia, in the tenth century, was the son of the illustrious Baron of Querfurt, who was renowned among his contemporaries, and beloved by all men. The sequel throws light upon the character of that house, for when the news arrived at the baron's castle of the son's martyrdom in Prussia, whither he had gone to preach the Gospel to the heathen, the excellent father was in such a state of mind that he could instantly carry into effect a resolution which he had long been forming, and retire into a monastery for the remainder of his days. In the year 1187 died that most illustrious and religious man, Peter Acotantus, patrician and senator of Venice, whose sanctity under the secular habit, attested by miracles, rendered glorious the church of St. Basil in that city, where his limbs were laid to rest. It was his brother of the same name who, despising the dignity and pleasures of the world, withdrew to the desert of Camaldoli †. Thus you have one brother reaping eternal glory as a senator, and another as a hermit. The great patrician family of the Ajutamichristo was illustrious at Pisa, in the thirteenth century. This could boast, at the same time, of a blessed Bartholomew, in the monastery of St. Frigidianus, of Frederic and Guido, either brothers or nephews of this saint, who evince their piety by building the choir of the Dominican church of St. Catherine, at Pisa, and of blessed Thomas, son of Bernard, who despising the honours and riches of his family, embraced the order of St. Dominic, and died in the house of St. John and St. Paul, at Venice ‡.

* Tschudi Einsiedlische Chronik, 40.

† Annal. Camaldulens. Lib. XXXIV.

‡ Id. Lib. XXXVIII.

In the year 1239, Albertinus resolves to pass the remainder of his life in the monastery of St. Just and St. Clement, in Volaterra, where his son, the blessed James de Certaldo, was professed. In 1281, Ingeramius de Certaldo follows his father and brother, and becomes a monk in the same house *. Hermolao Donato, a Venetian senator, and Marina Lauretana, his wife, were blessed in the number of their saintly children. This was the illustrious man of whom Ambrosius Camaldulensis speaks, who was ambassador from Venice at the council of Basle, and whose foul murder is attested on his sepulchre in the cloister of the monastery of St. Michael de Muriano, as having been perpetrated in the year 1450, by an impious hand, and suffered in the cause of justice, while he magnanimously forgave. Of their ten children, four only remained in the world, the rest left all for God. Four saintly sisters took the veil in the Benedictine convent of St. Servulus. Peter, whose portrait at full length by Tintoretti, is in the monastery of St. Michael de Muriano, of which he built the church, became the abbot of that house, distinguished by his admirable genius, learning, and sanctity. Lewis, who is praised by Leonard Justiniani, as a sublime philosopher, and most learned, was also a monk ; and Thomas, another devout religious man, became patriarch of Venice in the year 1505 †. In fact, examples of this kind are innumerable. Let us pass on.

The ages of faith in relation to the graces of the female character, might well fix the attention of all who have minds capable of being arrested by the delicate and sublime themes which belong to gentle studies. At the first, chastity, modesty, obedience, attention to domestic duties, and other virtues, made Christian women dear to their pagan husbands, and even gave these men a reverence for the divine philosophy in which they had been educated, so that they used to exclaim with Libanius, “*Proh, quales feminas habent Christiani!*” Moral writers appeal to this fact in developing the proofs of the divinity of the Christian religion, and historians supply the same evidence in uninterrupted succession, through all subsequent times. Whether there be slight shades of difference observable in different periods, we need not

* Annal. Camaldulens. XXXIX.

† Id. Lib. LXVII.

examine. One thing is certain, that upon the women of the middle ages the imagination might for ever dwell with peaceful and salutary delight. The striking opposition of figures in regard to the female character, which the life of faith has created, is well represented by the author of the *Martyrs*. “An astonishing contrast,” saith he, “was observable on all sides. The daughters of Lacedemon, still attached to their gods, appeared on the roads with their tunics half open, their free and bold manner, their confident looks, with such they used to dance at the festivals of Bacchus or of Hyacinth. Further on you discovered the Christian virgins chastely dressed, worthy daughters of Helen by their beauty, and more beautiful than their mother by their modesty. They were going with the rest of the faithful to celebrate the mysteries of a worship which renders the heart gentle for the child, charitable for the slave, humble for the poor, pure and holy for the young. It seemed as if one beheld two different nations, so great a change can religion produce in human breasts *.” Who has not experienced impressions somewhat similar in lands where the children of the pacific fold were but few amidst a multitude? Are we to ascribe the contrast, as we are told, to the defect of education in some, and to the high instruction or nobility of others? That this cannot be the true solution, is evident; for under circumstances of the same variety in other countries, the same effects are not discernible. The cause must lie deeper, and without doubt the phenomenon arises from the fact, that the latter are left to the fluctuating tastes of a civilization purely human and natural, while the former, for whom ‘twixt beautiful and good I cannot say which name was fitter, are daughters of the Catholic Church—the women of the middle ages—the women of the primitive ages—the daughters of Jerusalem who ministered to our divine Lord, and who followed his apostles with such fervour and constancy—the women of faith, transformed, and, as it were, new created. How strange to find men of the greatest genius, and of the most extensive learning in modern times, ignorant apparently of the existence of this mystic being. “Men” saith Goethe, “must strive after some distant good, and that with violent efforts. Men must labour for eternity;

* *Les Martyrs*, XIV.

whereas women are content with possessing on this earth a simple, near, and limited good, which they wish might always remain stationary with them *." Had this illustrious philosopher, then, never heard the hymn of Jesu corona virginum, attesting so sweet a page in the history of the human mind ; or, without waiting for the voice of the church and the testimony of historians, had he never met with any of the daughters of Jerusalem whom God anoints with the oil of gladness, on account of truth, and meekness, and justice ? One glance at the portrait of a St. Theresa, or of a St. Elizabeth, would be sufficient to dispel for ever such conceptions of the female heart. In the first of these illustrious women, how completely did the cloister swallow up all fond memory of former things —beauty, dress, feasts, evening conversations under orange trees, and Moorish songs, and the sound of the mandoline, and all that had adorned love in the eyes of a beautiful Spanish girl, nourished with the reading of the romanceros ! Love alone remained, more ardent since it had become purer, more profound since it had become more divine. For a while, it is true, this great soul struggled against the remembrance of the world. Ten years did not suffice to detach from the earth the heart that was not made for it : but how effectual was the ardour of its thirst when the true and living streams of that justice which it had so long sought for in vain, were at length yielded to it from the fountains of heaven !

In the preceding book, we had occasion to remark the intense affection evinced by women for the devotions and offices of the Catholic Church, and the desire after something more than "a near and limited good," which prompted them to seek unceasing sustenance in the exercise of divine worship. It might have been shown, for the same object that women used to make long pilgrimages. The holy Dorothea went from Montau, in Pomerania, to Rome, for the jubilee, in the year 1390, as did also queen Margaret, out of Denmark †. Queen Isabella of Spain used to recite her office, like a nun. She seemed to lead a contemplative life amidst all her cares, and the splendour of her chapel was celebrated throughout the kingdom ‡. Do-

* Goethe Torquato Tasso.

† Voigt. Geschichte Preussens, V.

‡ Lucii Marinei Siculi de reb. Hispaniæ, Lib. XXI.

nizo says, that “the countess Mathilda surpassed even priests in the love of Christ—

‘Ista sacerdotes de Christi vincit amore,
Tempore nocturno studiosius atque diurno
Est sacris Psalmis, ac officiis venerandis
Relligione pia, satis hæc intenta perita.
Hærent semper ei sapientes maxime cleri
Vestibus et vasis pretiosis rite sacratis.’”

The account of her last days still proclaims her unsated thirst. In the Bonden village she resolved to assist at the office on Christmas night, which was sung by father Ponzo, Abbott of Cluni. The immense cold at first so afflicted her aged limbs, that she returned sick to her bed. At day-break, though languid, she again heard mass, after which she gave the abbot, on his departure, sacred vestments, and silver vessels, and a holy cross adorned with gems. Similarly she celebrated the feast of the Epiphany; but when the season came in which Jesus fasted, she, though weak, desired to fast also for his love. The priests, however, prohibited her, and prescribed that she should only give abundant alms. Being confined to her bed during seven months, a small church under the invocation of St. James and Zebedee, was constructed by her orders before the house in which she lay, to which she gave lands and vestments, and there, while lying on her bed she continued to hear mass, that whom she served living, she might also in dying worship. Her body was buried within a vast tomb of white and limpid alabaster, in the Monastery of St. Benedict, of Padolerone on the Po, a house ten miles from Mantua, which had been founded by her grandfather, Tedaldo, and enriched by her own donations, where was found this history metrically composed.

To the eternal sigh of women the Church has been deeply indebted in all ages: and every where we find monuments of their pious liberality, of which the most illustrious example is doubtless that of this great countess Mathilda, who made the Church of God her heir, offering on the altar of St. Peter, her whole patrimony, extending from Radicofani to Cesena, which from that time has been ever called the patrimony of St. Peter. Celebrated was the munificence of the Countess of Eu, sister of Udalric, Archbishop of Rheims, and of Alberon, Bishop of Metz, who;

in the year 959, founded and endowed many monasteries, and restored others that had been ruined by the Normans *. Guilla, mother of the marquis Hugo, in the eleventh century, passing by Arretium, and happening to hear that the church there was commonly entitled of St. Mary the poor, exclaimed, in great indignation, “ Forbid it, heaven, that we should ever style her poor who produced the Dispenser of celestial riches ! Have I,” she then asked, “ any possessions in this neighbourhood ?” and being told that there was a villa near belonging to her, “ Let it then, be given immediately to this church,” she replied, “ that in future no one may even presume to call it poor †.” We find traces of the same devotedness of women to the Church in the most obscure annals. Thus about the year 700 we read of the noble lady, Hermentrude, leaving by will to the church of Bondies, in the diocese of Paris, her oxen, ploughs, and carts, and other implements of labour, and also a quantity of land, as well as certain vestments, to the church of St Denis, and others to the brethren of Bondies ‡. That great woman, Adelle, wife of Stephen, Count of Blois, who governed his territories after his death in Palestine, and with whom Ives de Chartres used to correspond, besides her liberality to many churches and convents, conferred such benefits upon Marmoutiers, as to be styled in its title deeds, “ majoris monasterii amatrix ferventissima.” A German traveller describes a charming scene in illustration of the affection of women for the ecclesiastical offices, when relating the return of a young Spaniard, Antonio, to his father’s house, near Cordova, after an absence of ten years, where no one recognized him but his sister, the most beautiful maiden of Andalusia, and of the world, as her brother Esteban says, and an angel besides. After the most affectionate embraces, and the tenderest entreaties, while a thousand questions were about to be asked respecting kindred and friends, Dolores, for such was the maiden’s name, having prepared refreshment to set before her brother, suddenly asks his permission to leave the house “ What, dear little sister, already ?” asks Antonio, “ before I have spoken ten words will you go forth ?” Yes, for it was the moment to repair

* Desguerrois Hist. du diocèse de Troyes, 185.

† Annal. Camaldul. Lib. XVIII.

‡ Lebeuf. Hist. du diocèse de Paris, VI. 61.

to the cathedral for mass, and the angelic daughter of Spain, the mild and gracious being, at the same time mystical and gay, will not suffer even a brother's love, and the joy of receiving him after so long an absence to interfere with the duties which she owes to heaven. The long-lost brother accompanies her. They pass through the Moorish arch of the cathedral tower into the court of oranges ; one of those spots the memory of which ever remains with the wanderer, to shed a glowing and delicious light of phantasy over the darkest ways of life ; the whole air of the place is embalmed with fragrance, and in the centre is a clear fountain ; some cypress trees, and two lofty palms are growing near it. Three sides of the court are composed of walks, adorned with Moorish arches, and a tower ; the fourth is formed by that wood of a thousand pillars, each of a different marble, adorned with a wondrous workmanship, constituting the cathedral, the nave and choir of which is in the Gothic style, being surrounded with a multitude of chapels, enriched with ancient arabesque mosaics, and the choicest paintings of a Cespedes, a Cano, a Murillo, and other masters. Here knelt down Dolores before the altar, and it was not until her brother had waited long in the court conversing with other young men who met there, that she was prepared to rise and follow him *.

" In Portugal, in the upper ranks of life, female piety and practical religion, are singularly conspicuous." It is an English traveller who makes this remark. " Among ladies of rank," he continues, " the characters of Martha and Mary are beautifully blended ; for even during the intervals of conversation, whilst their hands are busily employed in knitting and sewing for the poor, their minds and hearts are evidently engaged in meditation and prayer. In this there is no appearance of affectation, nothing obtrusive, or otherwise unpleasant to those who are less piously inclined. They assist at mass every morning, communicate twice a week ; they are religious without bigotry, pious without ostentation. A Portuguese family realizes all my ideas, and embodies all my notions of domestic happiness. It is the music of the spheres ; it is the harmony and loveliness of nature †."

* Huber Skizzen aus Spanien.

† Letters to Orosius on Portugal.

It was a question with philosophers during the scholastic ages, on which side, betwixt the two of human kind, lay the greatest sin, in the event which first brought guilt into the world. Peter Lombard, the master of the sentences, says, “that the woman sinned against herself, and her neighbour, and God; but that the man sinned only against himself and God; for he seems to have complied, wishing rather to risk all, than leave his companion to perish alone. The woman, therefore,” he says, “sinned most, and consequently her punishment was the greater. In dolore paries filios *.” On the other hand, Isidore and Hugo of St. Victor conclude, that Adam sinned more than Eve, because he sinned after more deliberation, and having had more entrusted to him †. Though St. Augustine says, that Adam’s judgment was not deceived in following Eve’s advice, but that he obeyed a social necessity ‡. After all, St. John of the cross comes to the conclusion that the woman sinned in some respect through ignorance, because she was seduced and deceived, while Adam’s fall was worse, “for Adam was not seduced,” says the apostle §; “Adam knew and willed his misfortunes ||.”

But whatever difference of opinion may have existed upon this point, and whatever be the cause of the phenomena, whether natural, arising from the fact noticed by Medea, that “a woman is born to tears ¶,” or whether it proceed from a more especial grace, in recompense of their early affection for Jesus Christ, all men seem to have been equally convinced of the supereminent piety, and singular religious merit of the female sex, under the influence of faith in the mystery which redeemed the world, and in submissive obedience to the Catholic church, the mother and mistress of the meek, and the fountain of justice to the human race.

The assiduity of women, in repairing to the Churches, is not a phenomenon which dates from the period of the decline of faith, as some modern travellers through France are inclined to suppose. In the Acts of the Apostles, where there is mention of the oratory on the banks

* Lib. II. distinct. 22.

† Hugo de St. Victor, Tract III. c. 6.

‡ De Civ. Dei, XIV. 11.

|| The obscure night of the soul, XXII.

§ Tim II. 14.

¶ Eurip. Med. 926.

of the river near Philippi, we read; “*Et sedentes loquamur mulieribus, quæ convenerant**.”

In primitive times, so many women and slaves embraced Christianity, that it was made an occasion to revile the Christian religion, as if such men alone had courage to preach their doctrine, and as if women alone would listen to it. Thus we see on an ancient gem, an ass clothed in a toga, preaching before two women, who seem to listen attentively; and this is supposed to be a satire on those slaves who endeavoured to convert the women of their master’s family. St. Jerome, writing to Vigilantius, and mentioning the profound awe and scrupulous reverence with which he always entered the Churches, adds, “*You may, perhaps, laugh to ridicule the weakness of women. I do not blush to possess the faith of those who first beheld our Lord after his resurrection, who were sent to the apostles, and who are commended to the holy apostles, in the mother of our Lord and Saviour. You feast with the men of this world; I will fast with women†.*”

The inscription near the shrine of St. Charles of Borromeo, in the cathedral of Milan, particularly states, that the holy archbishop had, in an especial manner, commended himself to the prayers of the devout female sex; which is the epithet that the Church always applies to these,—the tenderest, and often most heroic, of her children. The virtues that characterized women peculiarly during the middle ages, would be an inexhaustible theme for the historian, or the poet. I can only pass hastily before them, keeping in view their relation to the interior life of families, as constituting part of that justice, for which the human race thirsted, which was given to be the consolation of its pilgrimage, and the recompense of its faith.

Nevertheless, there was an institution existing without this sphere, which though external, produced too great an influence upon the domestic manners of our ancestors, not to be considered as a subject for our present investigation. I allude to the conventional life of nuns, whose example and instructions, both from their having presided over the early education of daughters, and from the necessary connexion which bound so many to the bre-

* Cap. XVI.

† S. Hieronym. Epist. XXXVII.

thren, and other relatives, who continued in the world, must have at all times, exercised no inconsiderable influence upon the character of society in general. Originally, indeed, this influence came from within. Abeillard, in two letters to Héloïsa, respecting the duties of her monastic state, shows, that nuns are only descendants of the holy women in the primitive church who accompanied our Lord and his Apostles; and that the monastic institute is only a mode of perpetuating those congregations of virgins and widows who then held so distinguished a rank. Thus St. Julia, in the third century, is named in the old history, *Sanctimonialis*, and described as leading a holy, religious life at Troyes, in the house of her father, where she remained secluded*.

The deaconesses, for whose ordination there was an express office, were perpetuated in the church until the ninth century, if not even to later times†. Their origin, as that of the recluses, may be easily traced to those pious women among the Jews, amongst whom was Anna, daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Aser, who for many years departed not from the temple, serving God day and night in fasting and prayer, and who desired to behold the infant Messiah‡. The influence of the religious communities of women upon the manners and general tone of society, was communicated through many channels, of which the education of daughters was, no doubt, one of the most efficacious. Dante beholds Constance in Paradise, who had been taken from

“The pleasant cloister’s pale,”

to become the wife of the Emperor Henry the Sixth.

“ From whom with violence were torn
The saintly folds that shaded her fair brows.
E’en when she to the world again was brought,
In spite of her own will and better wont,
Yet not for that the bosom’s inward veil
Did she renounce§.”

To an early acquaintance with the convent, much, indeed, that distinguished the character of women in the

* Hist. du Diocèse de Troyes, 40.

† Chardon Hist. des Sacramens, tom. V.

‡ Luc. II. 36.

§ Parad. III.

middle ages must be ascribed, for even when education had not been received there, occasional visits had been made to the devout sisters. The maiden of the castle knew what was the sanctity and peace of the secluded clostral life, and hence that ideal form of virtue was embalmed in her imagination, and impressed upon her heart with an eternal memory.

St. Odilo, the fifth abbot of Cluni, says that it would require the pen of a St. Jerome to describe the Empress Adelaida, who deserved the same praise as is bestowed on Paula and Marcella, Fabiola, Læta, and Demetriades*. In fact, many illustrious queens lived a clostral life upon the throne. Such were the wife of Charlemagne; Cunegonde, wife of Henry the First, king of England; Agnes, wife of the Emperor Henry the Third, whose mother was living in the convent of Fructuara; Elizabeth, wife of the Emperor Albert, first archduke of Austria; Radegonde, wife of Clotaire; Adoëre, wife of Chilperic; Batilde, wife of Clovis; and Agnes of Bohemia, wife of Frederic the Second. There was, moreover, an incidental mode of influence which nuns who inhabited cloisters exercised upon the life of families, of which an example may be witnessed in the beautiful incident related in the life of Du Guesclin, who, when a boy, owed his first encouragement, and perhaps the seeds of his future greatness, to the charitable and benignant remonstrance in his behalf, which his aunt, who was a nun in a neighbouring cloister, made with his parents, who were in the habits of despising and ill treating him; for so moved was his young heart by the look and mildness of the nun, that, it is said, from the same hour his whole character seemed changed, and he became an object of as much satisfaction in his father's house, as he had before been of disgust and aversion†. In the Lord of the Isles there is a parallel instance.

“ With sudden impulse forward sprung
The page, and on her neck he hung;
Then recollected instantly,
His head he stoop'd and bent his knee,
Kiss'd twice the hand of Isabel ‡.

* Bibliothec. Cluniacens.

† Vie de Du Guesclin, les Vies des grand Capitains Français.

‡ IV.

St. Lucia, in the convent of St. Christina of the Seven Fountains at Bologna, had been frequently seen by a certain noble youth, as she knelt at the grated window of her chamber, which looked into the church. Perceiving the impression which had been made on this stranger, who appeared to come often to the convent for the purpose of beholding her, she forsook the window, and contented herself with hearing mass from the farthest extremity of her cell, desiring to please Him alone who seeth in secret. The youth in despair departed to a remote and barbarous land, in company with the two thousand Bolognese, who, in the year 1190, went against the Saracens; and, in the meantime, Lucia slept in Christ. The Christians being defeated, and the youth taken prisoner, he was required either to deny his faith, or to suffer death. In his dungeon, the memory of her whom he had so often seen at the grate of the church in happy days came fresh to his mind, and he cried, "O Lucia, virgin of Christ, if thou canst prevail with our Lord, help me with thy prayers, and deliver me now in this distress." Ambrosius of Camaldoli relates that the same night the youth found himself at liberty, that he returned to Bologna, carrying his chains with pious gratitude, and that he placed them devoutly upon her tomb*.

So interwoven was the ideal of religious cloistered women with every kind of spiritual assistance, that there were families, if you will hear domestic annals, which believed that three nuns always appeared in some part of the house before the death of any of their members, to give them salutary warning. This has been long affirmed of one ancient family in the north of England; and Cardan relates a tradition somewhat similar, respecting a noble house of Parma†.

The travels of the nuns were another mode of communicating the saintly influence of the cloister to the manners of society. When St. Theresa travelled with some of her nuns, she used to carry a little bell with her, to sound at the usual hours for prayer and silence, as if still in the monastery, and, during these intervals, the mule drivers and conductors of the waggons would never address them. On one occasion, as she travelled with three

* Annal. Camaldul. Lib. XXX.

† De variorum rerum.

or four nuns, after leaving Toledo, the crowds that followed her made it necessary sometimes to have guards at the door of the poor people's houses when she stopped for refreshment. The news of her journey spread before her, and every one was ambitious of the honour of receiving her under his roof. A rich labourer, hearing that she was to pass through his village, ornamented his house, prepared a good dinner, and assembled all his family ; he even collected all his flocks, that Theresa might bless them. As she could not remain in that village, the good labourer came out of his house with all his train, to receive her blessing in the street. Nor was this influence confined to those who beheld the cloistered sisters on their journeys, or who received them as guests into their houses as they passed. While remaining within their enclosures, the example and the memory of their sanctity produced no less effect upon the minds of the people, than did their holy prayers and faith in the mind of God, inducing him to show mercy upon those who were united with them in the mystic bond of the communion of saints. There are few volumes of epistolary correspondence belonging to the middle ages, which do not contain proof of the efficacy of this channel for communicating the influence of the cloister to persons who were in the world.

We read that no one ever approached St. Catherine of Sienna, without departing a better person. Who has not heard of the meek Hildegard, who drew the court of kings to the peaceful shores of Bingen's pool, and who was to so many wanderers on the way an odour of life and salvation? No one need be told of the influence which is exercised in our age, by any individual eminently distinguished in a political or literary capacity. We find that he is consulted by persons from all countries of Europe : he commissions congenial minds to develope or revolutionize, according to the passions which move him at the time, the institutions which have existed in distant nations from the most remote antiquity. Well, during the middle ages, there were also individuals who exercised this extraordinary privilege; but what seems marvellous and incredible, though most true, these persons were saints ; not merely learned monks, acting as philosophers in the schools of their cloister, or as statesmen, as the ministers of kings ; not merely doctors and

pontiffs, on their chairs of ecclesiastical erudition, but simple maidens, daughters of the people, shepherdesses, and nuns. What dignity of rank, what eminence of genius, what pride of learning, did not yield lowly and devout homage to the meek Hildegard? Pope Anastasius writes to her, his beloved daughter in Christ, to beseech her prayers and those of her sisters on the mountain of St. Robert, near Bingin. Pope Adrian writes to her to confirm her in her good resolutions unto the end. Popes Eugene and Alexander the Third also write to her. Arnold, archbishop of Mayence, writes to her, the devout virgin and abbess, not doubting of the gifts of God, and asking her prayers, that, by their assistance, his days may pass in the fear and love of his Creator. A multitude of bishops from all countries, even from Jerusalem, as also innumerable monks, philosophers, and learned masters from Italy and France, write to her in terms of humility, begging her prayers, and desiring to have the consolation of her mystic and angelic salutations, to whom her answers breathe a solemn strain of prophetic counsel, which announce, in no disguised language, the need of amendment in which some then stood. Thus, to Arnold, archbishop of Mayence, she says "Wherefore do you hide your face from God, as if in perturbation of your angry mind? For I do not offer mystical words from myself, but according to what I behold in that living light; so that often what my mind does not desire, and what my will does not seek, is shown to me in a manner which constrains me to see it." Her answers are always received in a spirit of humility and penitence. Rudolph, the bishop of Liege, writes to her as follows: "In great distress of mind and body, I have desired to write to you, because I greatly need the clemency of God, whom I acknowledge I have offended and irritated by innumerable evils. Therefore, beloved sister, since I know that God is truly with you, I beseech your sanctity by his mercy, to stretch out a hand to me in this distress. Be it your care, by devout prayers, to withdraw me from negligence; and, in answer to me, write whatever has been shown to you from that unfailing and living light to awaken my sleep. May the most merciful God grant that I may receive consolation from your writings, and that by the help of your intercession, I may attain to the last mansion of eternal quiet." The reply of Hildegard

was in these terms : “ The Living Light, saith the ways of the Scripture, are straight to the lofty mountains, where flowers exhale their precious fragrance, and where the sweetest wind breathes, bearing delicious odour, and where roses and lilies display their beauteous faces. For a time, the mount had not appeared on account of the darkness of the blind, living air, and because the Son of the Most High had not as yet enlightened the world. Then came the sun from the east enlightening the world, and all the people beheld its splendour. And the day was very bright, and a sweet sound arose. O shepherds, mourn and weep, for that mount is obscured with black clouds. But be thou a good shepherd, and noble in manners, and as the eagle gazes at the sun, so do you, and bring back wanderers to their country ; and bear a light to this world, that your soul may live, and that you may hear that sweetest voice from the supreme Judge. Euge serve bone et fidelis. Therefore, O thou leader of the people, win a good victory, correct the erring, and cleanse the beautiful pearls from filth, that they may be fit for the highest King. May God protect you, and deliver your soul from eternal pain.” The Emperor Conrad writes to Hildegard, and says, “ Being prevented by the regal state, and harassed with divers troubles and storms, we cannot see you as we desire, yet we will not omit letters, which may pass to you. For, as we hear, there truly abounds in you, the confession of the highest praise, by the sanctity of an innocent life, and by the grandeur of the Spirit wondrously coming upon you. Therefore, though we lead a secular life, we hasten to you, we fly to you, and humbly beg the suffrage of your prayers and exhortations, since we live far otherwise than as we ought ; but know for certain, that in all your necessity, to the utmost of our power, we will endeavour to serve you and your sisters ; therefore, I commend to your prayers, my son also, as well as myself, who I hope will survive me.” In reply, she says, “ O king, remain in God, and cast off the deformity of your mind, since God preserves all who seek him purely and devoutly. So hold your kingdom, and administer justice, that you may not become an alien from the supernal kingdom. To you, therefore, saith God, Be corrected, that you may come purified to those times in which you will no longer blush at your own ^{pecc} ons.” Philip, count of Flanders,

writes to her in the same humble strain, but we have already seen his letter in a former book *.

Of the holy recluses I made mention elsewhere, when examining the ancient churches in which their cells are found, the influence of whose sanctity must not be overlooked here. The pontificate of Hugo, archbishop of Palermo, in the year 1170, was rendered celebrated by that holy anachoreress, the delight and safety of Palermo. The virgin Rosaly, the darling of each heart, who from all the youth of Sicily, retired to serve God in the solitude of mountain grottoes, echoing to the billows' sound. Sprung from Charlemagne by the kings of Italy, daughter of Sinnibald, bred in the court of Margaret, wife of King William, she forsook the honours and pleasures of the world, and retired to a cave in the mountains, first of Quisquinæ, and then of Ercta, commonly called Peregrini, near Palermo. In the caverns of Quisquinæ she made, as it were, profession of the anachoretic life, carving on their rocky side, with her own hand, these lines: “*Ego Rosalia Sinnibaldi Quisquinæ et Rosarum domini filia, amore Domini mei Jesu Christi in hoc antro habitare decrevi.*” What liquid delights she drew here from God, what converse she had with celestial messengers, can be conjectured by those who know the rich liberality of Jesus, according to the promise of an hundred fold in the Gospel, and who have heard a maiden's sigh for solitude and heaven. The year of her death is uncertain, but her remains were discovered in the year 1624, during the plague, in a cave on Mount Ercta, under a huge stone, which had often baffled the exertions of the curious. On this occasion, however, having greater perseverance, they succeeded, with repeated strokes of iron bars, in breaking through it, when they found the bones of the virgin Rosalia; falling on their knees, they kissed the sacred reliques. Upon applying however, to Jannettino Doria, the holy archbishop, he refused to have them exposed to public veneration, until the archives of Palermo, the constant tradition, and the consent of the citizens were found to agree in testimony. It was in the month of January that these bones, as gems of paradise, were borne on the shoulders of the first nobility through the streets of the capital and placed in the cathedral,

* Chronic. Hirsaugiensis, I.

where a marble inscription recorded that she had been the means, under divine Providence, of preserving the faithful people, as a multitude of miracles attested. Her festivals were afterwards celebrated on the 15th of July and on the 2d of September. She is represented in many ancient paintings, in different churches of Sicily, in the habit of an anchoress, having a cross and a book in her hand*.

At Lyons, from the time of St. Eucherius, there had always been devout women, who, under the name of recluses of St. Mary Magdalen, of St. Marguerite, and of St. Helena, shut themselves up in different parts of the city, spending their days in perpetual prayer, and receiving their food only through a window. A certain quantity of corn had been always set apart from the archiepiscopal granaries for their support. "When Raymond the archbishop," as the ancient document says, "being ill informed, and at the suggestion of some who had not God before their eyes, ordained that this allowance should be withheld in future, the recluses remonstrated, and his successor, Guillaume de Thureio, in the year 1359, restored that ancient custom, observing, in his reply, that they were public benefactors, in praying always for the archbishops, for the holy church, for the city, and for all the people." Berald de Lanieux, seigneur of Iseroa, in 1374, left a certain sum in his testament to each of these pious women of the city and suburbs of Lyons. Of the eleven ancient recluseries, the ruins of three, one near the walls, another in the vineyard of St. Martin, and another, called of St. Clair, near the Rhone, were to be seen when Paradin wrote his history †. Frequently the recluses of the middle age were widows. Thus in the Nibelungen poem, Kriemhild, after the death of Sifrids, takes up her residence near the cathedral of Worms. Before the beginning of the war against the Huns, the mighty count Ulrich lived at Buchhorn, on the lake of Constance, with his wife, Wendelgard, niece of the emperor, Otho I., in a happy and blessed union. Dreadful was the shock of this noble lady when intelligence arrived of her husband having fallen in battle against the Huns. To console herself in this calamity, she went to St. Gall,

* Sicilia Sacra, I. p. 101.

† Paradin Hist. de Lyon, Lib. II. c. 80.

and fixed her habitation near St. Mangen's church, received consecration from the bishop, and under the guidance of the blessed Wiborad, devoted herself wholly to works of virtue, with the intention of becoming a recluse. Every year she went from St. Gall to Buchhorn, to honour the memory of her noble lord with a festal anniversary. Once, as she was thus with her own hands distributing alms, a poor man demanded eagerly a garment, and seizing that which she offered, pulled her towards himself with it, and kissed her. Wendelgard, astonished and afflicted, directed her servants to punish this audacious beggar, when lo! showing a certain scar, he enabled her to discover in him her count Ulrich, whom she had thought dead. The history relates that Wendelgard was immediately restored to him, after the monks had declared her consecration null*. The fate of Wiborad, her holy instructress, was singular and full of pity. She alone fell a victim, when in the year 925, the Huns first came to St. Gall. Every one else had fled. The pagans supposed that there was a treasure concealed in her cell, and as they could find no door, they entered it through the roof, and finding only the poor recluse at her prayers, they struck her head with a halbert, inflicting a wound by which she bled to death. "Wiborad a paganis occisa," says the catalogue of the monks of St. Gall. "Wiborad martyrazata est," say the Annales Hapidanni. She was born in Kringnon in Argovia; she had learned from her brother, Hitto, to repeat the Psalms in Latin, had made a pilgrimage to Rome, and on her return had led a cloisteral life with two maidens, in a house near the cathedral of Constance, under the instruction of the recluse Zilia. After four years, she removed to St. Mangen's church, at St. Gall, where, in 915, she caused herself to be enclosed by bishop Salomon. She passed her time in prayer, weaving cloth, and giving instructions to persons of all classes, who regarded her with veneration, to whom she used to speak through her little window, exhorting them to love virtue, and avoid sin. Especially she employed herself in guiding the pious women, who came there for the purpose of becoming either recluses, as the noble virgin Raschild, or nuns, as her two maids, Bertrada and Gembra, or consecrated widows, as the countess Wendel-

* Ildefons von Arx Geschichte des St. Gallen, I. 225.

gard. After eight days the body of the blessed woman was committed to the earth, the whole community of the cloister assisting. She was regarded immediately as a martyr, and Abbott Engelbert prescribed that her anniversary should be celebrated at St. Mary's church, which order was confirmed by Pope Clement II., who canonized her. In later times a chapel was erected under her invocation near that church, and a chaplain appointed to serve it *.

The names of many recluses occur in the chronicles of the tenth century. Kerhild, the aunt of St. Notker, Bertrad, the young widow, Gisela, Diemut, Udalgard, Ina, Gotelinda, and others, many of whom attained to a great age, followed this mode of life. Kerhild continued in her cell fifty-six years, Bertrad twenty-two years, and Gotelinda is described as being a very aged penitent †. With what affection the Germans still cling to the memory of the recluses, may be witnessed in Tieck's affecting tragedy, entitled the life and death of the holy Genoveva, who had been wife to count Siegfried, a warrior under Charles Martel; the cave which this saint inhabited in the forest near Andernach, may still be seen. Certainly the cavern of St. Rosalie, on the Sicilian shore, and the mountain where Geneviève tended her flock, are, in the ideas of every Catholic poet, embalmed with the fragrance of heaven. The life of the holy Dorothea is recorded in detail by the historian of Prussia, as forming one of the most interesting episodes in the annals of that nation ‡. At her earnest entreaty, and by consent of the bishop, in the church of St. John at Marienwerder, a cell was built, into which, on the second of May, in the year 1393, St. Dorothea was admitted as a recluse, where she was enclosed by her confessor, John of Marienwerder, and there she spent the rest of her life in constant prayer and meditation, every day receiving our Lord in communion, and speaking to no one without permission, till the night of the twenty-sixth of June, in the year 1394, when she departed in great peace and sweetness to the embraces of her heavenly spouse. Then after three days, the cell was opened, and her body transported with great

* Id. I. 216.

† Eckehard in Lib. Bened. 154.

‡ Voigt. Geschichte Preussens, V. 617.

solemnity, by order of the bishop, John of Pomerania, to the cathedral of Marienwerder, where it was buried under a pompous tomb, at which innumerable miracles were immediately wrought, as a crowd of contemporary authors attest; so that multitudes of sick were carried thither from distant lands to be healed, and whither an innumerable host of devout pilgrims always streamed on her anniversary, to offer up their prayers, and to revere her relics *.

The historian of the Teutonic order, concludes his fifth book with this account of St. Dorothea, and these are his last words, "In the evening of this century which had so often beheld the soil of Prussia and Lithuania dyed with blood, devastated by wild war, laid waste by flames, by plunderers and slayers, and filled with lamentation and woe, over this wild and fearful scene stands the form of the holy penitent, as a consoling and lofty vision of charity and peace." "She lived in the memories of men," to use the words of the grand master, Konrad von Jungingen, as a patron against calumny, a nurse of piety against sorrow, a light of the holy church, an oil of mercy; to the frigid a fire of charity, and to the dead in corporal and spiritual miseries, a refreshing and reviving joy." The solemnity of an ecclesiastical origin was not essential to this mode of life, which was found to yield such enjoyments. Margaret Ruttegerin lived as a recluse in her own house and garden at St. Gall, and obtained from abbot Henry IV., an order that on her death the church should take care of this house until some other woman should announce an intention of becoming a recluse, to whom it was to be conceded. In the eleventh century these recluses began to live no longer in solitude, but three, six, or eight together, in enclosures styled closes, near monasteries or churches. In the twelfth century, the daughters of peasants, who had not as much facility for being received into regular cloisters, began to adopt in great numbers this manner of life, and to inhabit huts in woods, or on the points of rocks, or in deep valleys, and funds were left by devout persons for supporting them †. Thus at St. Gall there were the close of St. Mangen, the close of St. John, the close of St. Toergen,

* Id. V. 676.

† Chronic. Bertholdi Constant. ad an. 1091.

the close at St. Leonard's church, and the wood cell of Hundtobel, inhabited by wood sisters: at Pfteffers there were similar closes and cells as at most other places.

It is time now to inquire what was the original source and principle the channels and operations of which we have witnessed? What was the philosophical idea that presided over the institution of the clostral life? St. Chrysostom will tell you that "it was simply an observation of the greater freedom furnished by that state which cut off by the root all human disturbances, and enabled the soul to apply all its faculties to the things of God *." Hence in the acts of the Benedictines, in the ninth century, we read of hospices being erected for unmarried men as well as for widows. Writers of a certain class, in modern times, are very indignant that the church should sanction an institution which admits of there being maidens, who by their own choice are

"For aye to be in shady cloister mew'd
Chaunting faint hymns to the cold, fruitless moon."

But impartial historians are obliged to pay a tribute of admiration to that order by means of which such a multitude of noble intelligences were able to consecrate themselves in so many various ways, to every service that can exalt and console the human race; some in solitude and seclusion taking refuge in the immensity of God, others making vows to assist the poor, to tend the sick, to educate orphans: nor have there been wanting to our times philosophers who could defend with eloquent pens from the brutal scoffs of the self-styled rational school, those holy communities, where the daughters of the poor, along with the Montmorencis, the Bourbons, and the Condés, may follow the example of those illustrious Roman ladies, celebrated by St. Jerome, who were descended from the Scipios and the Emilian blood, and devote themselves in peace to the object of their immense desire. The nun of the middle ages was not a victim, as modern writers would lead men to suppose. Eleonora, daughter of the Earl of Richmond, and sister of Arthur of Brittany, on being commanded by her father to remove from the convent of Ambresbury to Fontevrault, had no other fear but that of being obliged

* Tractat. de Virginitate.

to return to the world ; to obviate which danger, she took the solemn vows before leaving England *. Neither was such the opinion of persons who remained in society. Observe the style in which Francis Picus of Mirandula writes to his sister, who was a nun : “ We rejoice in the Lord, dearest sister, and we contemplate with amazement what good things God hath done for your soul, who not only hath shown to you the way of perfection, but hath led you, as it were, by the hand, and introduced you within the narrow door. You have left brothers, parents, the world and all its blandishments, and fled naked to the standard of the cross. O happy souls, to whom God hath given the will of choosing poverty, that they may receive an hundred fold in this life, sisters, and mothers, and consolations ineffable, and in the future world an eternal crown of glory †.”

And now methinks it will cast great light upon history to visit one of these convents of the middle age,

“ Where peaceful rule, and duty free,
Walks hand in hand with charity ;
Where oft devotion’s tranced glow
Can such a glimpse of heaven bestow,
That the enraptured sisters see
High vision and deep mystery ;”

a privilege not confined to the sisters of St. Hilda, if you will only credit the historians of Prussia, who attest that St. Dorothea predicted the death of the grand master of the Teutonic Order, Konrad Von Wallenrod, and the choice and fate of his successor ‡, or the ancient tradition which relates that St. Bridget warned pope St. Urban V. not to proceed with his intended voyage for the sake of making peace between France and England, and that the event of his death immediately on his arriving at Avignon, proved the more than human foresight which had dictated her counsel. A few detached histories will show what was in general the object of these foundations, and the character of those who accomplished it. Queen Blanche, in her charter of foundation to the

* Lobineau Hist. de Bret. Liv. V.

† Joan. Francis Picus Mirand. Epist. Lib. IV.

‡ Voigt. Geschichte Preussens, V.

abbey of Maubuisson, says that she has designed that house for nuns of the Cistercian order, who may pray God for the souls of Alphonso, King of Castille, her father, and of Eleanor, her mother. After the first abbess, who was but a simple nun that had been removed from the abbey of St. Anthony, at Paris, almost all the abbesses were women of high and royal blood, Montmorencis, De Moncys, D'Ivrys, D'Etoutevilles, De Dintevilles, D'Annebaults, and D'Estrées. Louisa-Mary, Palatine of Bavaria, daughter of Frederic IV. King of Bohemia, having abjured heresy in 1658, took the veil here, and became abbess. She was an admirable artist, and used to present her holy paintings to the house, and to the parish churches of the neighbourhood. Nothing could exceed the magnificence of the Gothic church of this royal abbey of Maubuisson. Queen Blanche was buried in the middle of the choir, under a tomb of brass, representing her figure, and containing eight Latin lines, the last of which records that she died a nun—

“ Tanta prius, talis jacet hic pauper monialis.”

Mathew Paris mentions that she took the veil before her death, that her crown was placed over it, and that she was thus buried *. So early as the year 670, we find a rich lady named Chrotilda building a convent for nuns at Bruyeres, in the diocese of Paris, and her niece becoming the first abbess †. Magdalen Tasse, sister of St. Francis Xavier, after being in her youth lady of honour to queen Isabella, abandoned the court of Arragon for solitude and the cross. She became abbess of the convent of St. Clare at Gandia, where she practised an act of heroic charity in her last moments, imploring an easy death for a sister, and the sufferings to which she knew by revelation that sister had been destined, for herself. Louise-Marie de France, daughter of Louis XV., who took the veil in the convent of the Carmelites, at St. Denis, used often to speak of the happiness of her condition in comparison with her former state. “ As we have customs,” she used to say, “ so had the court, but the latter were far more severe than the former. In the evening at five I am now summoned to prayer ; formerly I had to assist at play. At nine the bell calls me to matins ; at Versailles,

* Le Bœuf. Hist. du diocèse de Paris, tom. IV. 188.

† Id IX. 236.

at that hour, I used to be called to the theatre." It was a frequent custom for ladies to make retreats in convents, where some even remained during their lives. Henrietta Maria of France, Queen of England, founded a convent of the visitation at Chaillot, in which she spent the year 1658. Louisa, Palatine of Bavaria, her niece, came to her there, and remained a year edifying all the community, leading the life of a nun without having taken the habit. The blessed Isabella, sister of St. Louis, lived in a separate apartment in the abbey of Longchamps, without being a professed nun. Two princesses of the blood, Blanche of France, fourth daughter of Philippe le Long and Jane of Navarre, died in that house, having taken the veil. King Philip used frequently to visit this convent, and lodge there, in which also he died, after his daughter had taken the veil. When Conan-le-gros, Prince of Brittany, visited Fontevrault with his mother, he saw there Matilda of Anjou, his cousin, already a widow before the age of twenty, who had resolved thenceforth to have no other spouse but the Son of God *. Details of this kind show how the two lives were intermixed, and what an action must have been exercised upon society by the religious communities of women. The portrait of the noble Abbess of St. Hilda, though by a modern poet who too often suffers the prejudices of a sect to disfigure his historical pictures, has so much resemblance to the real character that it cannot be viewed without pleasure :

" The Abbess was of noble blood
 But early took the veil and hood,
 Ere upon life she cast a look,
 Or knew the world that she forsook.
 Love, to her ear, was but a name
 Combined with vanity and shame ;
 Her hopes, her fears, her joys were all
 Bounded within the cloister wall :
 And her ambition's highest aim
 To emulate Saint Hilda's fame :
 For this she gave her ample dower
 To raise the convent's eastern tower ;
 For this, with carving rare and quaint,
 She decked the chapel of the saint,

* Lobineau Hist. de Bret. Liv. IV.

And gave the relique-shrine of cost
With ivory and gems embost ;
The poor her convent's bounty blest,
The pilgrim in its halls found rest."

We have, however, a portrait of St. Hilda, from the hand of the Venerable Bede. He says, that "while abbess of the monastery of Tadcaster, bishop Aidan and all the religious men that were acquainted with her, were so taken with her wisdom, and her affection to the service of God, that they visited her often, had a great respect for her, and diligently instructed her in all good. Her wisdom and prudence were so great that not only persons of an inferior rank resorted to her for counsel in their necessities, but even kings and princes sometimes sought and followed her advice. Nor was this servant of Christ, Abbess Hilda, (who for her extraordinary piety and grace was called mother, by all that knew her) an example of life only in her own monastery; she also afforded occasions of salvation and correction to very many living at a great distance, who had the happiness to hear by fame of her industry and virtue."

Mabillon ascribes to the influence of St. Boniface what he terms "the singular ornament of his order," viz. the learning of the nuns who followed the Benedictine rule. Willibald describes those of Britain as profound in the studies usual to men; and in Germany the same example was followed, so that of Chunihilt and Berathgit we read, "Valdae eruditæ in liberali scientia;" and Lieba is described as so devoted to study, that "excepting when at prayer, the divine pages never left her hands." She had been instructed in grammar, and the other liberal arts at an early age, and she became in the end most learned. Nay, the nuns of this age followed the example of the monks in transcribing books, and even in composing others. Those of the monastery of Eikers, in Belgium, became celebrated for their labours in reading and meditating, in writing and in painting. It is recorded of the abbesses Harlind and Renild, that besides works of embroidery and weaving, they had written with their own hands the four Gospels, the whole Psalter, and many other books of the divine Scripture, which they ornamented with liquid gold, gems, and pearls. In an earlier age, it is recorded of Cæsaria, Abbess of Arles, that

"her nuns, having her for mistress, wrote out beautifully several divine books, during the time that was spent between psalmody and fasting, vigils and readings." A theme of general admiration in Germany had been the learning of Gertrude, and Hroswita the nun of Gandersheim, who had been an admirable poet, and who sung in verse the deeds of the emperor Otho I*. Gervaise remarks, that "the problems of Heloise, or the questions on the sacred Scriptures which she and her nuns used to propose to Abeillard, prove by the choice of difficulties that these sisters exercised an acute sense of discernment." How interesting is the following epistle of Peter the venerable to the Abbess Heloise :—"When I was young, I remember hearing of your renown, not indeed at that time of your religion, but of your honest and laudable studies. I used to hear that a woman, although bound in the trammels of the world, applied herself diligently to literary pursuits, and to the study of secular wisdom, so as to surpass not only other women, but almost all men. Soon after, when it pleased the Most High to call you by his grace, you changed the nature of your studies, as a truly philosophic woman ; for logic substituting the Gospel, for physics the apostle, for Plato Christ, for the academy the cloister. You have carried off spoils from conquered enemies, and have returned with Egyptian treasures, after passing the desert of this pilgrimage, to erect a precious tabernacle in your heart to God. These things, sister beloved in the Lord, I say to you, not through adulation, but for the sake of exhortation, that you may be rendered more careful to preserve that good, and more ardent to excite the holy sisters who are subject to you ; for though a woman, you are one of those animals that Ezekiel the prophet beheld, which ought not only to burn like a coal, but like a lamp to burn and shine. To you indeed remains the palm of humility and of discipline. It is sweet to me to prolong discourse with you, for I am delighted with your celebrated erudition, and still more enchanted with the fame of your sanctity †." Thus was perpetuated in the holy communities of the middle age that phenomenon of learned religious women, which had so much

* In III. Sæcul. Benedict. §. 4.

† S. Petri Ven. Abb. Clun. Epist. Lib. IV. 21. Bibliotheca Cluniacensis.

edified the church in early times, of which we find so many examples in the letters of St. Jerome. He says that Marcella acquired in a few months a knowledge which he had not himself obtained till after the labour of many years. "What virtue did I find in her! what penetration, what purity, what holiness! She became so learned, that after my departure, whenever any difficulty was found in any obscure passage of my book, people used to apply to her, as to a judge; but as she possessed to a sovereign degree that delicate tact which dictates always what is becoming, she used to communicate her ideas, even those that she owed wholly to the penetration of her mind, as having been suggested to her either by me or by some one else, so that while instructing others, she appeared to be a pupil herself; for she remembered the prohibition of the apostle *."

We have seen the influence which the religious communities of women, and the example of holy recluses, must have produced upon the general manners of society during the ages of faith. Let us proceed to speak of the material condition of women in the middle ages, in relation to the social order.

No one need be told of the moral and social state in which Christianity found women when it commenced its visible eternal course. There were, it is true, some Pagan women who had a strong disposition to embrace the Jewish religion, and to worship the true God, whom we find styled in the Latin epitaphs, "religionis Judaicæ metuentes." Thus we have an inscription to this effect, "Aurelius Soter, et Aurelius Stephanus Soteriæ matri pientissimæ, religioni Judaicæ metuenti." Such women had but a short step to make to become Christians, as in like manner there are multitudes of women born and educated under the modern discipline who entertain a certain fear and instinctive veneration for the Catholic church, and whose conversion is at all times an easy task to those who medicine the soul. Besides these, moreover, there were, in the worst times, among the Gentiles, some few "in whom," as Cicero says, alluding to Cœcilia, "remained, as if for the sake of example, the vestiges of ancient duty †." Pliny speaks, in remarkable terms, of

* 1 Cor. xiv. 34. S. Hieronym. Epist. ad Principiam, Virg.

† Pro S. Roscio Amer.

Fannia, a Roman matron, “Quæ castitas illius!” he exclaims, “quæ sanctitas! quanta gravitas! quanta constantia! non minus amabilis quam veneranda *!” The admirers of the Pythagorean discipline could enumerate seventeen women whom, in different ages, it had formed to illustrious virtue †. The old poets, too, commemorated the fleetness in hunting of Atalanta, the natural affection of Anticlea, the marital love of Alcestis, and the generous soul of Machairia. Celebrated were the philosophic apophthegms of Theana the Pythagorean, whom Didymus affirms to have been the first woman to philosophize and write poems, as also the science of Themisto, the wife of Zoilus; of Lampsacene, the wife of Leontius; and of Muia, the daughter of Theanes. All the daughters of Diodorus, Menexene, Argeia, Theagnis, Artemesia, and Pantacleia, were dialectitians. Arete the Cyrenean, instructed her son Aristippus, surnamed *τον μητροδίδακτον*. With Plato philosophized Lastheneia the Arcadian, and Axiotea the Phliasian, and with Socrates, Aspasia. St. Clemens of Alexandria says, “it would be long to tell of Corinna and Telesilla, of Sappho, and Eirene the daughter of Cratinus, and of Anaxandra, and of many others ‡.” Nevertheless, the opinion of the ancients respecting the rank which ought to be assigned to women, was but little in harmony with these examples. The Athenian in Plato, speaks of it as a principle acknowledged on all hands, that the female sex is worse disposed towards virtue than the male §, which even Æschylus seems ready to admit, for his Minerva delivers the same judgment:

*τὸ δὲ ἄρσεν αἰνῶ πάντα,
ἄπαντι θνητῷ||.*

Pericles declares that the sum of female virtue consists in being spoken of as little as possible, whether for good or evil ¶; and, in fact, we find that St. Jerome has to apologize to the Gentiles for dwelling at length on the praise of women: for he justifies himself by observing, that Christ, whose religion he preaches to them, did not

* Epist. VII. 19.

† Jamblich. de Pythagoric vita, cap. 36.

‡ Stromat. Lib. IV. c. 19.

§ De legibus, Lib. VI.

|| Eumenid. 737.

¶ Thucyd. II. 45.

disdain to have the three Marys for his disciples, and that it was to women he first showed himself after his resurrection*. The social condition of that sex, corresponded with these narrow views. Wherever Christianity found woman, she was without security, and often held under a cruel and sanguinary despotism. It is an historical fact, though it seems hardly credible, that the Pagan Prussians had a custom of killing every female child in each family excepting one; and the bull of Honorius the Third denounces this enormous barbarity, as if invented to oppose the propagation of the human race. Certainly the diabolic tradition of which I shall hereafter speak is here. In the ancient civilization of the Gentiles, the wife in general was a personage so obscure and unimportant, that Medea in the tragedy, is represented as not knowing whether the king *Ægeus* is married or not†. The women amongst the Dorians, indeed, were addressed by the title of ladies, *δέσποιναι*, a title uncommon in Greece, expressive of the estimation in which they were held; but the wives of the Ionians, according to Herodotus, did not even dare to address their husbands by their proper names; yet, as Medea says, women then in marriage had but one hope,

ἡμῖν δ' ἀνάγκη πρὸς μίαν φυχὴν βλεπειν †.

We find the women of the ancient drama continually lamenting the destiny which rules them:

*πάντων δ' ὅστ' ἔστιν ἐμψυχα, καὶ γνώμην ἔχει,
γυναῖκες ἐσμὲν ἀθλιώτατον φυτόν §.*

From this reality of degradation and sorrow, all the ideas communicated by the Christian religion, were calculated, indeed, to deliver woman; but it should be remembered, that it was the doctrine of virginity, as a French writer truly observes, which has more than all contributed to their emancipation. Before this doctrine was delivered or confirmed by Christianity, the woman could not treat upon equal terms with the man; but by making the virginal state a new condition, and that inde-

* St. Hieronym. Epist. ad Principiam, Virg.

† Eurip. Med. 670.

‡ 249.

§ Id. 233.

pendent of all positive institutions, Christianity changed every thing ; for, from the first moment that there was a free and voluntary condition of life for women, they had a personal importance ; and this doctrine of virginity, which seems fatal to marriage, on the contrary constituted its new force and its grandeur ; for, from this moment, it was what it had never been before, a free and reciprocal alliance. The tone and manners of society, indeed, at present, sufficiently prove that the modern philosophic systems, by attaching ridicule to the virginal state, have undermined the edifice which secured the social dignity and security of women.

With respect to the ancients, I know not whether the fact that they had not before them the same examples as have been given to Christian ages, may be admitted as some extenuation ; their ideal of women was certainly wholly different from that which the Catholic religion has created. There were, indeed, examples, the memory of which can never perish, when, as St. Augustin says, one woman had more humanity than a whole nation* ; but, in general, the angel of mercy, the mild and gracious being, full of pity for all suffering, and at the same time the maiden who could support any labour for the love of God's church, like Sabine de Steinbach, in the thirteenth century, who worked at the towers of the cathedral of Strasburg, or like the heroic daughters of St. Vincent of Paul, who endured privations and toils that seem incredible, was a character that the heathen society could not have conceived. We must not seek by false praise to exalt the moral worth of the ancients beyond its real value. It is the Catholic religion, or its traditional force, which has provided that asylum for the suffering and discouraged heart. When the gladiators used to ask for life, the Delias, Lesbias, Cynthias, Lydias, all these women of Tibullus, Catullus, Propertius, and Horace, would give the signal for death with the same hand that the Muses had so often sung. It is the author of the Martyrs who makes this observation †. What a contrast to the ideal of women in ages of faith, when a philosopher like Marsilius Ficinus, could find no stronger reason for recommending marriage to his friend Antonio Pelocta,

* De civitate Dei, Lib. III. 19.

† Lib. III. 53.

than that unless he knew what it was to see a wife in sorrow, he would not know how to feel compassion for the calamities of others*. Women of the Catholic type, who could thus soften the hearts of obdurate men, and fill their souls with infinite and truly divine pity, who could suggest to the poets of the twelfth century, who collected and no doubt retouched the Niebilungen, that exquisite line, “the virtues of the maiden made other ladies fair;” who could inspire a Gerson and a St. Bonaventura with that thought, that there never was such an antidote to the fascination of sin as the beauteous face of the blessed virgin, which presented, as S. Ambrose and S. Jerome said, the image of her soul,—women, upon whom the ideal of Mary shed so sweet a light of sanctity, and who, in return, could enable men to understand, and in some measure behold, what was the innocence and piety, and grace, of that divine mother,—women of that heroic devotion which we read of in the acts of holy martyrs, and to which in latter times Pacca bears so noble a testimony, when speaking of the pious French ladies during the last dreadful persecutions of the Church in France †,—women, like the Andalusian maid, the fairest of the fair and all angelic, like the Spanish daughter in general, of grace indescribable, answering to the most lovely form of the imagination, appearing at the same time mystical and gay, and yet never wishing to turn aside from the spectacle of misery, when there is a possibility of alleviating it, who will throw down her mandolin, and quit the pageant of the castle hall, to bind up the beggar’s wounds, and heap coals of fire on the head of some blaspheming wretch,—these were, in truth, beings of a new creation, the fruits of that faith which could remove mountains, and of that spirit which renews the face of the earth. Admirable, indeed, was this restoration of nature which their virtues attested, for

“ Where does the wisdom and the power divine
 In a more bright and sweet reflection shine?
 Where do we finer strokes and colours see
 Of the Creator’s real poetry ? ”

The saints and holy fathers are never weary in expressing their regard and admiration for these devoted

* Epist. Lib. IV.

† Memorie Storiche, II. c. 2.

daughters of the Church, who may often be represented like St. Elizabeth in the old paintings, adorned with three crowns, to denote that as virgins, wives, and widows, their conversation was always most holy*. Never was it, as S. Bernard says, from any feeling contrary to this intimate affection, that youth was so carefully admonished to retain its modesty. It was not that it should disdain what God hath made, but that it should fly from what man hath added†; that, as S. Augustin says, it might not meet with another Eve, nor suffer from that shade of tenderness which is produced by the foliage of the tree which supplied the first clothing to her nakedness ‡. Hear St. Jerome consoling Paula on the death of her daughter, the young widow Blesilla, “ Who will give water to my head and a fountain of tears to my eyes, that I may weep, not, as Jeremiah saith, for the wounds of my people, nor as Jesus, for the misery of Jerusalem, but that I may weep for sanctity, mercy, innocence, chastity, that I may weep for all virtues failing in one stroke of death? I confess my affections. This whole book is written with tears. I call to witness Jesus, whom Blesilla now follows; I call to witness the holy angels, whose fellowship she now enjoys, that my sorrow has equalled yours, Paula. Therefore, while a spirit rules these limbs, while the breath of life is granted to me, I swear that her name shall be ever on my tongue, to her will I dedicate my labours, for her will I spend my strength. There shall be no page that does not sound Blesilla; and to whatever region these memorials of our discourse shall penetrate, there with them shall she be found§.”

Amidst the darkest scenes of history, we always meet with testimonies to the angelic graces of the women who stood near. The sons of Roger de Montgomeri, by the daughter of William Talvas, surnamed the Vagabond, were ferocious, greedy, and remorseless oppressors of the poor; but William of Jumiège remarks at the same time, that his daughters, Emma, Matilda, Mabille, and Sibylle, were generous, honourable, and full of affability for the poor, as also for monks and the other servants of God ||.

* Wadding Annal. Minorum, tom. I. 1235.

† De ordine vitæ. ‡ St. August. Epist. ad Læt.

§ Epist. XXII. ad Paulam.

|| Hist. du Normand. Lib. VII. c. 16.

Behold S. Jane. Who is this image of mildness and sanctity, this foundress of the order of the Annunciation at Bourges, and who dies wearing its habit, after a life of great innocence and suffering? She is the daughter of Louis the Eleventh of France.

Guilla had lately become the wife of the Marquis Rainerius, when S. Peter Damian wrote to her as follows: "Daughter, you have passed by marriage into a house sufficiently ample, indeed, but of evil manners; eminent in riches, but confused by a depraved law of living. Endeavour to correct this. Let the confiscations of the poor be abolished; put an end to all unjust customs, and to the oppression of the rustics. Let not the orphan's food taste sweet in your mouth, and remember the fate of the wife of Count Hubert, your own brother, who perished under the ruins of his castle, which fell to the ground the same day that she took away the pork of a widow, and spurned her, when she asked a portion of it, from the gate*." After some years, we find a summons sent to this Marquis, to appear within three weeks, in person or by legate, at Rome, before Gregory the Seventh, to show why he should not incur anathema, for slaying his brother with his own hand, and for other deeds against his own soul†. The letter of the saint shows, however, that much was in the power of the wife, even in cases the most discouraging. So also in the metrical history of the Countess Mathilda, by Donizo the Benedictine, we read of Ildegard often persuading her husband to follow better things.

"*Conjugis Attonis non fiat oblivio nobis
Ildegarda quidem fuit hujus nomen amicæ
Docta, gubernatrix, prudens, proba, consiliatrix
Ad meliora virum suadebat sæpius ipsum,
Cum quo Birsellum monachis fabricavit habendum‡.*

That nothing was more intolerable than a rich woman, was the conviction of the Roman satirist§; but Catholicism could even associate riches and the splendours of a throne with the graces and mildness of the female heart.

* S. Pet. Damiani, Epist. 18. Lib. VII.

† Annal. Camaldul. Lib. XVIII.

‡ Vita comit. Mathild. Lib. I. c. 3. Muratori Rer. Italic. Scriptor. tom. V. § Juv. Sat. VI.

In fact, during the ages of faith, the daughters of kings might often have heard addressed to themselves those words of the poet,

“ I hold you as a thing ensky’d, and sainted
By your renouncement, an immortal spirit ;
And to be talked with in sincerity
As with a saint.”

The character of Maude, wife of King Henry the First, is thus described,

“ Prospera non lætam fecere, nec aspera tristem,
Aspera risus erant, prospera terra erant.
Non decor effecit fragilem, non sceptræ superbam ;
Sola potens humilis, sola pudica decens.”

She used to go every day in the Lent season to Westminster Abbey barefoot. She would wash and kiss the feet of the poor people and give them bountiful alms, for which, being reprehended by a courtier, she gave him a short answer, which is recorded by Robert of Gloucester.

“ ‘ Madame for Goddes love is this wel i doo
To handle sich unclene lymmes, and to kisse so ;
Foule wolde the kyng thynk if that hit he wiste,
And ryght wel abyly hym er he your mouth kiste.’
‘ Sur, sur,’ quod the Quene, ‘ be stille, why sayste thou so,
Our Lord hymself ensample gaf so for to do.’ ”

Pass to what land we will, it is still the same character which we meet everywhere. We behold it in Alice, duchess of Brittany, on whose tomb, in the Abbey of Villeneuve, we read

“ Inter opes humilis ita vixit, quod sibi vilis
Mundus erat pridem, licet arrideret eidem.”

We behold it in Blanche of Navarre, who was commemorated on her tomb in the Abbey of Joie, as the mother of the poor, and the living rule of manners. We behold it in the ducal house of Tuscany, of which Donizo the Benedictine describes the illustrious line.

“ Uxor Tedaldi fit Guillia dicta Ducatrix
Hæc placuit parvis pietate, placebat et altis*.”

* Vita Mathild. Lib. I. c. 4. Murat. Rer. Italic. Script. tom. V.

Above all, in the person of the illustrious Mathilda, it appears in its full lustre.

“Prospera non mutant, seu non hanc tristia turbant.
Bajulat hæc parvos, inopes sustentat et altos
O cultrix Christi, quantum studiosa fuisti,
A te non ullus vacuus discessit homillus,
Si Domini certum fore discere servum.”

The memory of the Catholic lady must have been still fresh in the minds of his contemporaries, when Spenser gave that picture of the matron in his Fairy Queen.

“Whose only joy was to relieve the needes
Of wretched soules, and helpe the helpelesse pore.
All night she spent in bidding of her bedes,
And all the day in doing good and godly deedes *.”

With these meek saints we shall hereafter become more acquainted, when we come to visit the institutions of pity in reference to the benediction of the merciful. For the present, in relation to the justice of the middle ages, it will be sufficient of a few to speak. Women being unable, as St. Theresa observes, to preach by words, in consequence of the prohibition of the apostle, endeavoured always to preach by their actions†. It was Maria de Vignarod, duchess of Aiguillon, who instituted the house in Rome of the Priests of the Mission: and St. Frances, while her husband lived, wishing to withdraw the Roman matrons from secular pomps and vanity, founded at Rome the house of the Oblats, under the rule of St. Benedict, where, upon becoming a widow, she retired, after begging admission with tears.

The lady of Beaufort Ferrand was said to have embalmed with the odours of her example, the parish of Janvry, and others adjoining, in the diocese of Paris. Ancient books tell of her prodigious alms, her desire to procure instruction for the peasants, her protection of the curates in the exercise of their duty, restraining abuses, her zeal in instructing poor women, and their daughters, in visiting the sick, and the dying, in accompanying the blessed sacrament on foot, to whatever distance it was carried, and in providing ornaments for

* Book I. 10.

† The Road of Perfection, chap. V.

the Churches. She died in 1650 *. Lebœuf relates that at Bretigny the memory of the Lady of Berthevin, who died in 1587, was always in great veneration there, though there was no longer any one of her family in the country. The spot where she had been buried was known by tradition, though it was marked by no monument; and the people generally loved to repeat her name, as that of a holy woman who had made a blessed end †. In like manner, the wife of Bouchard de Montmorency, who died in the fourteenth century, being represented on a tomb in the Church of Houssaye, without any name or inscription, was, nevertheless, known by the people to have been named Anne; and so strong was the tradition of her holy life, that when the Abbe Lebœuf wrote his history of the Diocese of Paris, he says, they used always to speak of her as the Lady St. Anne ‡.

Rohesia, daughter of Aubrey de Vere, chief justice of England, under Henry I., and wife to Geoffrey Mandeville, the first earl of Essex, erected a cross in the high way, on the spot where the town of Royston now stands; a pious work to keep the way-farer in mind of Christ's passion; whereupon it was called "Crux Rohesiæ," before there was either Church or town; but afterwards, when Eustach de Merch had founded there a little monastery of canons regular in honour of St. Thomas of Canterbury, there were inns built there, so that in process of time, by little and little, it grew to be a town, which was called Rohesia's town, or Royston. There is here a curious grotto, into which I have often descended with religious reverence, the walls of which are covered with sacred images, and religious symbols, which were wrought, it is supposed, by the hands of this devout lady, who, as one tradition relates, became a recluse in her latter days. Innumerable are the memorials of female piety, which date from the middle ages. Marguerite, queen of Scotland, daughter of Edward, king of Hungary, who was the son of Edmond Ironside, and brother of Edward, king of England, was distinguished by the sanctity of her life, as well as by the nobleness of her blood, being sprung from a long line of kings. Among other good deeds, she rebuilt the convent of Iona, which Columban, the ser-

* Lebœuf Hist. du Diocèse de Paris, tom. IX. 144.

† Id. XI. 292.

‡ Id. tom. XIV. 231.

vant of God, had constructed in the time of Brude, king of the Picts, but which had fallen to ruin through the tempests of war, and length of years *. The Saxon chronicles are full of allusions to the foundations made by devout women, such as the daughter of Erkenbert, king of Kent, who is styled “ holy damsel of an illustrious sire.” St. Bathilda, queen of the Francs, whom Corby in Picardy, revered as its foundress, is minutely described by a writer who lived in the same age. “ Being of Saxon race,” he says, “ she was of a gracious and subtle form, and of a beautiful and cheerful countenance. To the king, her husband, she showed herself as an obedient wife; to the princes as a mother; to the priests as a daughter; to young men and boys as the best of nurses; to all as an amiable and gracious friend. She loved priests as fathers, and monks as brothers. To the poor she was a pious nurse, distributing great alms to them; she was always exhorting youths to religious studies, humbly supplicating the king for the Churches, and for the poor people, and daily commanding herself with tears to Christ, the heavenly King †.” Nor will it be an unworthy association, if descending to a lower rank, and to later times, we speak next of Pernelle, wife of Nicolas Flamel, one of these holy matrons, whose charities alone suffice to render them historic personages. The details in her last will are very curious. Besides what was to be given to priests for masses, and to monks, and to brothers serving hospitals, who were to say vigils for her soul, she leaves money to the sick of the hospitals, to orphans, and to poor people, to pilgrims, and to young maidens. All was to be given for God; and no one was forgotten. Neither Martin, who gives the holy water at the door of St. James, her parish Church, nor the five people who are in the habit of sitting at the gate to ask alms, nor the other poor who usually sit close to the pulpit in the Church, during the sermon, nor the little boys whom she specifies by name, nor Jehannette who makes the tapers, nor her servant Gautier, nor Mengin, her young clerk for God †.” Marie Felice des Ursins, duchess of Montmorency, used always

* Orderic. Vitat. Hist. Nor. Lib. VIII.

† Acta Sanct. Ord. S. Benedict. tom. II.

‡ Hist. Critique de Nicolas Flamel et de Pernelle sa femme, p. 297—302.

to make a spiritual retreat when her husband was absent. Her charities were boundless ; she gave pensions to indigent families, sums to hospitals, to prisoners, and to a number of poor confraternities. She laboured to appease enmities, to stop law-suits, to gain pardon for soldiers, to convert people of vicious lives. It is recorded of her, that she could not endure to hear any one criticize a sermon, for every preacher seemed to her worthy of reverence. While in the sorrowful castle of Moulins, she would not reveal a secret which would have injured the cardinal in the king's estimation ; nor would she permit her servants to utter a word against her enemies. The princess of Epinoy continued to her last hour, to practise all the exercises of piety ; and she was seized with death in the Church, at an early hour of the morning, in her sixty-first year. Maria Theresa, wife of Louis XIV., and daughter of Philippe IV. of Spain, used to make a retreat in some austere community before every great festival of the Church. Of her charities, we shall witness examples in another place, to which the foregoing details might have been referred, could we have wholly separated the justice from the mercy of Christian women, whose angelic ministry sheds such a soft light amidst the dark scenes of war, and civil commotions. Philip Villani says that the Pisan captives, when conducted to Florence, were lodged in the prisons of the community, and were abundantly provided, by good and charitable Florentine women, with all that they wanted. During the recent persecutions of the Church, the devotion of women has fully corresponded with the highest expectations which the mind, nourished with ecclesiastical traditions, could form of its efficacy. Open the pages of a *Pacca*, and you find that it is women who fly to present their offerings to the captive pontiff at Florence, at Lyons, and at Valence, and who press round to water his feet with their tears ; observe what passes at the present day, and it is women who, as at St. Sebastian, are seen to follow the devoted monks with prayers, heroically offered up aloud for their deliverance.

During these late horrors, every Christian woman, in Spain and Portugal, as formerly in France and England, has, according to her ability, and the occasion, repeated the part of the Countess Mathilda towards the clergy, who fled to her for safety, of whom Donizo says,

“ Defuit haud ulli, quin profuit optima cunctis,
 Non ab ea mœstus, si quis vir venit honestus,
 Unquam præteriit, sed consolatus abivit,
 Vestibus e sacris multos hæc nota Ducatrix
 Patres Catholicos vestisse quidem reminiscor *.”

When history and real life can furnish such pictures, it is not strange that old Romance, and the sense of the Catholic ideal, should represent women invested with the graces of angels.

No marvel that the poets of the middle age in general, should speak like Champier, who says of women,

“ ————— celluy qui en dist blasme
 Doit estre réputé infasme †.”

When these portraits of female virtues are full of an ineffable charm, still one sees that they only copy from practical living models before them. The same Champier indeed contents himself with adding, “ Femmes ont des hommes pitié ;” merely confirming the testimony of the Greek poet,

Ἐχει τοι δύναμιν εἰς οἴκτον γυνή ‡.

But most commonly they dwell at length upon all their characteristic graces. That noble knight, Olivier de La Marche, in his work entitled, “ Le Parement et Triomphe des dames d’honneur,” says, that he composed it for one in whom were united “ humility, attention, and diligence, perseverance, firm resolve, good thoughts, loyalty, magnanimity, patience, liberality, justice, sobriety, faith, decorous dress, devout memory, charity, remorse of conscience, the fear of God, piety, a horror of evil, prudence, hope, riches of heart, nobility of understanding, acquired by the recollection of death. This,” he adds, “ is the habit to triumph, and to be well adorned at all points.” He continues to explain each of these qualities, and in describing the fear of God, gives this admonition :

“ Fuyons la cause qui aultruy bien empire
 C'est ung péché qui ne peult estre pire §.”

John Marot, in his Doctrinal des Princesses et nobles Dames, gives many instructions which express the peculiar female graces, which were then deemed essential,

* Vita Mathild. Lib. II. c. 2.

† Goujet Bibliotheque Françoise, tom. X. 136.

‡ Eurip. Iph. in Taur. 1046.

§ Id. tom. IX. 386.

proving clearly how much women then differed from that allegorical personage, described by Guillaume de Lorris, in the romance of the Rose, of whom he says,

“ Car quand bien peignée elle étoit
Bien parée et bien atournée
Elle avoit faite sa journée.”

He enforces the necessity of prudence, liberality, faith, of esteeming learned persons, of using things with moderation, of avoiding idleness, of cherishing gratitude to God, of giving good examples, of not deferring good actions to the approach of death, of maintaining peace, honour, patience, and of prayer to God in spirit and in truth *. Hear what a noble man of the age of chivalry witnesseth. “ I have often heard knights say, that when Messire Geoffroy used to ride through the country, when he saw the castle or manor of any lady, he used always to ask to whom it belonged, and when they would reply, it belongs to such a one, if the honour of that lady had incurred a stain, he used to go out of his way as far as half a league to get privately to the gate, which he used to mark with a little piece of chalk, and then ride away †.” In the romances of chivalry, which are true representations of the contemporaneous society, we find the women characterized by a high and uncompromising tone of manners ; their lords had no reason to fear the trial of that magic vessel desired by the knight in Ariosto, which showed his consort’s guilt to him that drank, nor their children, the waters of the overflowing Rhine, whose retributive discernment has been the theme of northern legends. When the knight Gallhalt le Brun had conquered at the tournament under the tower, and had sent to say to the beautiful lady within that it was for the love of her he had conquered, and that he prayed her to send him some gift, great or little ; the lady, who of other love besides the love of her husband, had never thought, when she heard that charge, replied to the messenger in these words, “ If he hath conquered at the tournament, hath he not had recompense sufficiently high and noble in being held the best knight of all the place ? Say to him from me, that I am not a woman to render guerdon to a strange knight. I have my husband, fair and good ; he it is who is my friend and my knight ; I seek no other

* Tom. IX. 26.

† S. Palaye Mem. sur la Chevaleriè. l. I. 147.

but him. All this you will say from me*.” In general, we are not aware of the extent of learning which was possessed by the women of the middle ages. In old Suabian chronicles, we meet with the duchess Hedwig, in the tenth century, who, in her castle of Hohentwiel instructs her husband’s nephew, Burkard, who afterwards became Abbot of St. Gall, in the Greek tongue, and in the rules of versification †. Eckehard II. monk of St. Gall, by permission of his abbot, used to visit this castle, in order to teach her Latin, and explain Virgil to her. So learned and studious was the great countess Mathilda known to be, that the patriarchs of Jerusalem and Constantinople, as well as the Roman pontiffs, used to send her their own writings. Donizo, her chaplain, says that she equalled bishops in application.

“ Nullus ea Præsul studiosior invenietur.
 Copia librorum non deficit huicve bonorum,
 Libros ex cunctis habet artibus atque figuris.
 Immemor est nunquam servare statuta secunda ‡.”

No accomplishments of erudition, however, were found to spoil the mild graces, or weaken the religious sentiment of these daughters of faith, to each of whom might be applied Lear’s description of Cordelia,

“ Her voice was ever soft,
 Gentle and low ; an excellent thing in woman.”

Mary Cajétane Agnesi, after distinguishing herself among mathematicians, chose to hide her literary glories in retreat, devoting herself to the assistance of the infirm and aged poor, in the hospital Trivulzi, at Milan, in which she died. Anne of Britanny, the idol of her country, and the wonder of her age, skilled in astronomy, Greek and Latin, as well as any clerk in her duchy, was another memorable example. In her book of hours she is represented on her knees in prayer, her two daughters standing behind her, and her patron, St. Anne, on her left hand. Celebrated in the domestic histories of Padua was Eleonora Maltraversa, the wife of Papafava Carrara, mother of an illustrious line, and possessed of such wisdom and rare qualities of mind, that noblemen came from all parts of Italy to consult her as an oracle whom they

* Gyron le Courtois, f. CCLXIX.

† Eckehard in Cas. c. 10. ‡ Vita Mathild. Liv. II. c. 20.

used to find administering medicines to the poor *. Who can enter the solemn halls of Padua without being reminded of Helena Piscopia Cornaro, that fair, illustrious and holy woman, clad in the habit of St. Benedict, who possessed a perfect knowledge of the Spanish, French, Latin, Greek, Hebrew, and Arabic languages, who was a poet, a theologian, an astronomer, and who was admitted doctor in philosophy in that university? It was in obedience to the will of her father, in whose house she resided, though always wearing the monastic habit, that she consented to this act, which, by its publicity and singularity wounded her exquisite sense of what belonged to the retiring modesty of her sex. "All ordinary kinds of glory have been reaped by our family," said her father, "nothing remains but this surpassing honour which shall be ours on your compliance." "I obey you," said the saintly daughter, "but I feel that it is making the sacrifice of my life." She only requested as a condition, that the pulpit from which she was to hold forth might be transferred from the hall of the university to our Lady's chapel in the great church. Thither she passed through the learned assembly, which was composed of celebrated men, who had flocked from distant parts of Italy to behold a scene so extraordinary. After accomplishing the exercises to the delight and astonishment of all present, and having received the laurel crown, she hastily withdrew, to escape the applause and admiration of the crowd, but her prophetic words were soon verified. The interior agitation brought on fever, and almost immediately it was perceived that she could not survive the shock. It was in her last moments that the intelligence was received of the defeat of the Turks, and the deliverance of Christendom; but it was too late, or rather joy completed what humility had begun. She expired in a transport of pious gratitude, praising in sublime ejaculations the victorious Christ, and resigning into his hands that chaste, angelic spirit which had fled from its frail tenement through shame at receiving honours which seemed due to him alone. The author of the book entitled on the use of romances, amongst other charges against history, complains that women hardly appear in it. But surely in whatever sense we understand history, the accusation is

* Bernardini Scardeonii *Hist. Patavinæ.*

ungrounded. The virtues of the countess Mathilda were not consigned to the silence that Pericles prescribed, for both in life and death, her fame sounded to the ends of the world. Hear Donizo.

*“Sunt ubique boni fuerant sibi maxime noti,
Nam qui trans Pontum, seu Galliciae remorantur,
Christo jure preces, ex ipsa fundere sæpe
Curabant, missos sibi mittebantque benignos *.”*

The spirit of chivalry, as well as the customs and legislation of the feudal age, gave even a political importance to women, which sometimes, perhaps, caused them to occupy a station in society, and to fulfil duties, for which they were neither generally qualified by nature, nor designed by the grace which had delivered them. One old writer styles the countess Mathilda “a military woman;” nevertheless their conduct during the middle ages, in this unfavourable and ambiguous position, constitutes a true miracle of history, of which this very instance is perhaps the most memorable. What a union of virtues in that venerable woman, the empress Agnes, who assumed the reins of government on the death of the emperor, Henry III., his son Henry being only five years old, and held them during five years, displaying consummate prudence, and singular industry †, endeavouring to keep off the gathering storm, and to preserve peace and order, governing with the greatest wisdom, strength, and justice ‡. This was she to whom the great instructor of the desert, Peter Damian, writes in terms of such praise, after beholding her entry into Rome. “You have come humble to the humble, poor to the poor, as if along with rude shepherds and the rustic throng, to adore the child crying in the manger. Truly to see you then, and those that were with you, was a wondrous spectacle, an example most edifying of the imitation of the Saviour. You had laid aside the insignia of imperial grandeur; you appeared as a lowly penitent; you chose the sufferings of a mortified condition. On seeing you arrive thus, with Hermisinde, your relation, the widow of William, Count of Poictiers, it seemed as if Mary Magdalen came with the other Mary to the sepulchre, not indeed to seek the living among the dead, but to adore the vestiges of

* Vita ejus, Lib. II. c. 20. † Chronic. Hirsaug.
‡ Voigt. Hildebrand, p. 41.

him that was risen.” Altruda, of the noble and powerful Roman family of Frangipani, the wife of Rainerius, Count of Berthenora, came at the head of a military force which she joined with that of William Marchesalla, of Ferrara, to relieve Ancona, in the year 1172, when it was besieged by Christian of Mayence, arch-chancellor of the emperor, Frederic the First. She is described by Romuald of Salerno, and Andrea Dandulo, in their chronicles, and by Boncampagno, the Florentine, in his book on the siege of Ancona. The latter says, that “in beauty this noble lady shone amongst those who attended on her as the morning star amidst the others, at the hour of prime.” She tells the people of Ancona that after her husband’s death, although oppressed with sorrow, she has governed his domains without contradiction. We find, in fact, that she makes great donations to the monks of Camaldoli, for the soul of her husband. She tells the citizens that on hearing of their distress and peril, she has left her castles, towns, and possessions, and has hastened to their succour, leading at her side her only son, a minor, who, though but a boy, being mindful of his father’s magnanimity, was inflamed with zeal to come to the assistance and protection of friends *.” Who does not recur with delight to what he may have read in old Norman history of that beautiful and wise countess, Sybille, the wife of duke Robert, of whom William of Jumiège says, that “in the absence of the duke, she used to direct the public and private affairs of the province better than the duke would have done if he had been present †.” While Robert de Culei, surnamed Burdet, was absent in Italy, his wife, Sybille, daughter of William of Caprea, defended Tarragona. She had no less courage than beauty. During her husband’s absence she was full of vigilance. Every night she armed herself with a cuirass like a knight, mounted on the walls, made the tour of the place, and kept the sentinels awake. “What praise,” cries Orderic Vitalis, “is due to a young lady who thus serves her husband with faith, by an attentive affection, and who piously governs the people of God with ability and vigilance ‡.”

In the cathedral of Lucca, on the tomb of Berta, wife

* Annal. Camaldul. Lib. XXX.

† Hist. du Normand. Liv. VIII. 14.

‡ Hist. Nor. Lib. XIII.

of the marquis Adelbert, of Lucca, who died in 925, you may read these lines among others in her praise :

“ Quæ specie speciosa ; bono speciosior actu
 Filia Lotharii pulchrior ex meritis.
 Concilio docto moderabat regmina multa
 Semper erat secum gratia magna Dei *.”

An earlier and perhaps still more beautiful example, was that of St. Bathilda, to whose mild and gracious manners I before alluded, who deserved to be entrusted with that portion of her husband's authority which regarded the protection of the churches, and the consolation of the poor. Charged with the regency on his death, she enfranchised the serfs; but as soon as her son Clotaire III. was of age to reign, she hastened to gratify her love of holy retirement, and withdrew to the monastery of Chelles, which she had founded, and where she lived as a simple nun, devoted to works of piety and charity to the poor, in which house she died in the year 680. Beatrix the great duchess of Tuscany, so often praised by St. Peter Damian, was so highly and universally venerated, that cities contended for her tomb. Muratori transmits the verses of Donizo †, in which he expresses his regret that such a celebrated and holy lady should have her sepulchre in Pisa, an emporium of the East, which hears the perjuries of Pagans, Turks, Africans, and Parthians, who trade there, and which thus contains so many facilities for crime, instead of being entombed in Canossa, which was an eminent city in those days for religion and purity of manners ‡. What would the ancients have thought of this contention for a woman's grave? Above all, how admirable appears the union of female justice in the middle ages with princely power, in the person of her illustrious daughter, the countess Mathilda? “ When the whole world” as Donizo says, with a poetic licence, “ was infected with the leprosy of schism, it was a woman in Italy who remained constant to Christ, in the person of Gregory his vicar.

“ ‘ Munda domus sola Mathildis erat spaciousa
 Catholicis prorsus fuit haec tutus quasi portus ;

* Italia Sacra, I. 802.

† Rer. Italic. Script. tom. V. Vita Mathild. Lib. I. c. 20.

‡ Annal. Camaldul. Lib. XX.

Nam quos damnabat rex, pellebat, spoliabat
 Pontifices, monachos, clericos, Italos quoque Gallos
 Ad vivum fontem currebant funditus omnes
 Scilicet ad dictam Dominam jam mente benignam
 Quæque requirebant apud ipsam repperiebant.' "

Her justice deterred the enemies of the church, who sought to plunder it, and her death will be the signal for letting them loose.

" Stabant O quanti crudeles atque tyranni
 Sub specie justa, noscentes te fore justam :
 Qui dissolvuntur, jam pacis foedera rumpunt
 Ecclesias spoliant, nunc nemo vindicat ipsas *."

The lady of old feudal times has ever been fit argument of the poet's strain ; witness that of the Last Minstrel, where it presents the lady of Branksome appearing on the castle wall, to answer the summons of the English lords who come to demand the person of Sir William of Deloraine, leading before her eyes her little son, their captive, to whom she makes that grand reply,

" For the young heir of Branksome's line,
 God be his aid, and God be mine !
 Through me no friend shall meet his doom,
 Here, while I live, no foe finds room."

At the moment when Sobieski mounted his horse to hasten to the relief of Vienna, during the memorable siege in 1683, when the Turks threatened to conquer this bulwark of Christendom, the queen, holding in her arms the youngest of their children, embraced him, and wept. " What reason have you to weep, madam ?" said the king. " I weep," she replied, " because this child is not in a condition to follow you like the rest." Truly when it was a question of defending the holy state of Christendom, or of maintaining justice in the absence of law, in defence of the meek and the oppressed, the high, chivalrous sentiments of nature may have been allowed free scope, and the ideal of Plato's chivalry realized, without incurring the censure of the calm Eternal Wisdom. Such words as those of Clare to Wilton, must then have had a noble import :

* Vita Mathild. Lib. II. c. 2. and 20.

" Go then to fight! Clare bids thee go!
 Clare can a warrior's feelings know,
 And weep a warrior's sigh;
 Can Red Earl Gilbert's spirit feel,
 Buckle the spur upon thy heel,
 And belt thee with thy brand of steel,
 And send thee forth to die!"

Not, therefore, in the light of an isolated and wholly unprecedented fact, stands in history the heroism of the Maid of Orleans, of which Pasquier says, that, for his part, he regards it as a true miracle of God, an opinion which, in our age of criticism, has been supported by the eloquent pen of Goerres*. Nothing was more in harmony with the spirit of those times, than the spotless purity of her manners in the midst of an army, the ardour with which she resolved to contend for justice, the prowess of her deeds in its support, the wise simplicity of her answers, and the voluntary offering and sacrifice of herself to a cause which she believed to interest heaven. Pasquier alludes to another memorable example of a woman heroically constant in fidelity to the cause of truth and justice. "The history of the constable of St. Pol," says he, "has filled my soul with despit and compassion. With similar effects have I reviewed the tragic history of the Duke of Bourbon; but now that I come to Mary, queen of Scotland, (and remember what means of information he possessed respecting her,) I seem to have only tears†." Petrarch, in truth, made an unjust restriction, when, in allusion to the two sisters of the Cardinal Colonna, he speaks of the distinguished virtue of the Roman women in general, and says, "It is with reason that they are renowned above their sex; for they have the tenderness and modesty of women, with the courage and constancy of men." What else was this but the ideal of the Christian woman realized in all Catholic countries during ages of faith?

Ferdinand, son of King Alphonso, was saved by his wife Isabella, when he had been defeated and in danger of losing his kingdom. This courageous princess went secretly, disguised as a Capuchin, to find her uncle, the Prince of Tarentum, who was the most formidable of the

* Die Jungfrau von Orleans.

† Recherches de la France, Liv. VI. 15.

enemies of her husband, and throwing herself at his feet, appeased him. But here we must distinguish, as the schoolmen say. All the ideas of the middle ages tended to inspire men with aversion for such kind of solicitude as that of the Countess de Penthievre, who made her virtuous husband, Charles of Blois, promise, on leaving Nantes, before the battle of Aurai, in which he lost his life, that he would consent to no accommodation with John de Montfort; and on the other hand, with love and admiration for that evinced by Jane of Navarre, who, on hearing that her husband, the Duke of Brittany, through indignation at the articles proposed by the King of France, had resolved, in despite of danger, on arresting his ambassadors, took up their children in her arms and threw herself on her knees before him, to entreat that he would suffer his wrath to cool, and never rose from the ground, till she had persuaded him to revoke the order*.

These, however, are rare occasions calling forth heroic and extraordinary efforts. It suits our object better to mark the consequences of the thirst for justice, in the fulfilment of the more common duties of those whom nature had designed for the consolation and instruction of domestic life. “Happy the man,” cries a French poet, “to whom God grants a holy mother!” Happy the ages, then, of which I attempt the history, which were accustomed to behold multiplied the maternal image in all the sweetness, strength, and perfection to which faith had exalted nature.

The venerable abbot whom you are about to hear, reader, is the celebrated Guibert de Nogent, who was born in the year 1053, in the castle of Beauvaisis, and when you have heard him describe his mother, you will know in general what was the maternal character during the middle ages. “God of mercy and of sanctity, I render thanks to thee for all thy benefits. And first, I thank thee for having granted me a beautiful, chaste, and modest mother, who was infinitely filled with the fear of thy name. As for her beauty, it is not altogether vain to speak of it. If Sallust had not thought that beauty alone, without morals, might be praised, he would not have said of Aurelia Orestilla that in her, besides beauty, there

* Lobineau Hist. de Bret. VIII.

was nothing good to praise. And, indeed, although an image in relation to faith is said by the apostle to be nothing, nevertheless that apt conformation of members is not undeserving of reasonable praise; for, although momentaneous beauty is mutable by the instability of blood, as every thing else of imaginary good, yet it cannot be denied to be good; for whatever is eternally instituted by God is beautiful, and whatever is temporally beautiful, is only as it were a mirror of that eternal beauty which has been witnessed when angels have appeared to men, and which will be seen in the bodies of the elect, when they are made conformable to the brightness of Christ in his transfiguration. I render thee thanks, O God, for having added to her beauty virtue. Thou knowest how thou didst impress her with the fear of thy name, which she found a remedy against all mental diseases; how she loved domestic retirement, and how careful she was not to condemn others who went much from home; and when, by strangers or servants, any fables of this kind were related, how she used to turn away, and endeavour by whispers to put a stop to them, being as much afflicted as if it were her own character that was called in question. The virtuous looks of my mother, the fewness of her words, and her constant tranquillity of countenance, were not made to embolden the lightness of those who saw her. It was far less from experience than from a kind of terror with which she was inspired from on high, that she learned to detest sin; she used often to tell me that she had so penetrated her soul with the dread of a sudden death, that, on coming to a more advanced age, she bitterly regretted that she no longer felt in her aged heart those same agitations of pious terror which she had felt in an age of simplicity and ignorance. In the eighth month after my birth, my father, according to the flesh, passed away. Although my mother was then in the brilliant lustre of her beauty, she resolved to remain a widow. What great examples of modesty did she then give! Living in an extreme fear of the Lord, and with an equal love for her neighbours, especially those who were poor, she governed us and our goods prudently. Her mouth was so accustomed to recal without ceasing the name of her deceased husband, that it seemed as if her soul had never any other thought; for whether in praying, or in distributing alms, or even in the most ordinary

acts of life, she continually used to pronounce the name of this man, which showed that her mind was always occupied with him. She offered daily sacrifices for his soul, and gave great alms, and she often beheld him in visions, which, as they did not inspire her with any security, but merely excited her solicitude, must no doubt have come from God, and from those angels who have care of the dead. She was assiduous in repairing to the churches, being never on the common occasions absent from the nocturnal offices. At her own expense, she maintained, with humble faith, a lamp perpetually burning in the church of St. Ledger. She learned the seven penitential psalms by heart, not by reading, but by hearing them. She was universally venerated, and being much visited by noble men and women, on account of her amiable and gracious conversation, she used, when they went away, to have great scruples lest she should have uttered any less true or idle word. Thou knowest, O God, with what purity and holiness she brought me up, not sparing even to clothe my little body in the pomp of raiment, that I might seem to equal courtly or royal boys. Neither sleeping nor waking, did her solicitude for me ever cease. At length, on St. Gregory's day, she sent me to school to learn grammar, from a man who could not, indeed, teach me what he did not know himself, but from one who was most careful to preserve me in virtue. For with whatever was modest, with whatever was chaste, with whatever was part of exterior elegance, he most faithfully and lovingly imbued me. In after years, when I was elected abbot, thou knowest, O God, how much she was afflicted; for what others deemed a source of honour, was to her matter of intolerable grief; because she did not wish me to be exposed so young to so many dangers, especially knowing that I was ignorant of forensic things, having devoted myself exclusively to letters. One would have thought that the admonitions which she gave me on this occasion, and her predictions also, must have come, not from an illiterate woman, but from a most learned bishop. When my mother at length was seized with her last illness, both my brother and I were absent at Nogent: God spared her tenderness and ordered all for the best. When my old master, who had assumed the religious habit, weeping stood by her death-bed, and said, 'Lo your sons are far away, and perchance you are grieved that you

should die during their absence;' she replied, looking on him fixedly, 'Had they even remained within the adjacent cloister, God knows that I wish neither them nor any other of my relations to be present at my death. There is only One, whom with all my strength I worship; only One whose presence I desire now.' The same night she departed, not ungratefully, as we believe, to the embraces of her God*."

Happy ages, when God gave men holy mothers. Happy the man in modern times who has not occasion to seek for them in the chronicles of the past. "There sleep," says a poet in our days, speaking of his mother's grave; "sixty years devoted to one single thought,—of a life past in doing good; of innocence, of love, of hope, of purity. What aspirations towards her God! what faith in death, what virtues in earnest of immortality! How many sleepless nights spent in alleviating pain! How many pleasures renounced in order to assist poverty! How many tears, at all times ready to flow and mingle with the tears of others; how many sighs after another country; and how much patience to endure a life of which the crown was elsewhere!" This was the mother of the middle ages; on beholding which I feel a tear spring up by pious memory waked, though time steals even sorrows from the heart, doubtless because they were sweeter than any joy. Cold judgment and the sense of goodness are all that remain, where it was once thought that impassioned love and devoted tenderness must have been eternal.

If you would seek other examples from the same history, your search need not be long. There you will behold the illustrious and pious matron Willa, mother of Theobald, who renounces all the consolations of home and country, and flies to the desert of Salonica, on the first tidings of her long-lost son having been discovered there under a hermit's cowl, and there she serves God with him till death makes the separation†. There you will see Muriel, the first wife of Tancred de Hauteville, who, says the old chronicle, was beautiful, strictly virtuous, and in conversation most holy; worthy of perpetual memory, and wondrously praised and extolled by all men. There you will see Frascade, too, his second wife, who made no dis-

* Guiberti Abb. de Novigento de Vita propria, Lib. I. 11.

† Annal. Camaldulens, Lib. XVII.

tinctions in her love between her own children and those of the former marriage; so that it was impossible to discover by her manner which were her own.

During the middle ages, it was often necessary to find an apology rather for the abundance of maternal affection, than for its absence; and yet the passage of St. Ambrose, to which holy men had recourse on these occasions, must have been the more satisfactory, as it held up to them so faithful a mirror, in which they could discern how the spirit and manners which prevailed around them were often superior to the type of nature. “Consider,” says the holy bishop, “what the mother of Zebedee’s children sought with and for her sons. It is a mother solicitous for the honour of her sons, of whose vows indeed the measure is immoderate, and yet it should be pardoned; it is a mother far advanced in age, studiously religious, destitute of consolation; arrived at that stage when she ought to be assisted or nourished by her offspring, and yet she suffers them to be absent from her, and prefers to her own pleasure that they should deserve the recompense of having followed Christ; for at the first word of the Lord calling them, they had left their nets and followed him. Moved, therefore, by the indulgence of maternal affection, she besought the Saviour, saying, ‘Grant that my sons may sit the one on thy right hand and the other on thy left in thy kingdom.’ Although it was an error, yet it was an error of piety; for the bowels of a mother are strangers to patience, and although greedy in vows, yet the cupidity is pardonable which is not greedy of money but of grace; nor is it a shameless petition which consults not for herself but for her children. Consider the mother, think upon the mother. Christ considered the love of the mother, whose old age was consoled by the recompense of the sons, which though wearied by maternal desires, endured the absence of the dearest pledges. Consider also the woman, that is the weaker sex, whom the Lord had not as yet confirmed by his own passion. Consider, I say, the heir of that first woman Eve, who was transfused into all, sinking under the weight of immoderate cupidity, whom the Lord had not as yet redeemed with his own blood, nor as yet delivered by his death from the long-accustomed affections and appetite of power.

The woman, therefore, failed in following an hereditary error *.”

The Christian manners, in regard to young women, prescribed the reverse of what was required by the customs of Sparta. It appears from St. Chrysostom, that before marriage, women lived in retreat. “ How,” he asks, “ can a man know beforehand, the character and defects of the woman that he is to marry, since till that moment, custom requires that she should live in retreat, and in the habit of restraining herself †.” During the middle ages, the same discipline prevailed, and Rubicon observes, that even in modern times, these young pensioners from convents have been led to the altar in preference to others who had been taught by their ostentatious education, to assume the forms of a Greek statue, when accompanying themselves on the harp, and to fix a date of chronology, with the skill of an academician.

Yet, in the women of the middle ages, was not wanting the spirit which had been the admiration of antiquity; nor when occasions required, the corresponding deed which had been immortalized in the poetry of Greece. There were still Antigonas, though there were not as yet, Belindas. William Campisamperio of Padua, after spending his first year in prison, on his escape, took arms against the tyrant Eccelino, from whose cruel yoke he sought to free his country. But being betrayed by Alberico, who had only pretended to be the tyrant’s foe, he was again cast into prison, and finally beheaded in the public square of Padua, where, by order of Eccelino, his body was left on the ground to be devoured by dogs. That night, however, while no man durst remove it, all his relations and friends being proscribed, came Daria, the beautiful daughter of Count Albert of Baone, with the daughter of Gerard de Campisamperio, and some other ladies, who, taking it up, carried it to the Basilica of St. Antonio, and there, with lighted tapers, and as much solemn rite as was consistent with secrecy and dispatch, placed it in a holy grave †.

St. Jerome says, that a daughter should not go to the Basilicas of the martyrs, unless in company with her mo-

* Lib. V. fide de cap. 2.

† Tractat. de Virginitate.

‡ Bernardini Scardionii Hist. Patavinæ, Lib. III. 13.

ther *. In this respect, during the ages of faith, we are again presented with the manners of the old poetic world, for of the feminine boldness which belongs to a certain style of education in later times, we find no trace in Homer. When all the companions of Nausicaa fled on the approach of Ulysses, the poet expresses the modesty of Nausicaa by saying, that she remained because Minerva had filled her mind with courage †. At present, perhaps, on such an occasion, the instruction of a goddess would not be required.

It must not be inferred, however, that the meek daughters of the Catholic discipline in the middle ages, were deficient in graces, corresponding to the charms with which they had been endowed by nature.

At no time is there any thing wholly isolated or solitary in morals or genius; and, therefore, we may infer much respecting the character of noble women of the middle ages, from beholding the portrait of that Laura, whom the verses of Petrarch have immortalized. Her piety in days of youthful joy, rising to matins, and leaving her chamber only for the Church, her union of beauty and sanctity, her calm resignation in sorrow, the justice and grace which marked all her ways, "Her words," says Petrarch, "had the dignity of nature, and her voice was a source of continual enchantment; soft, angelic, and divine, it could appease the wrath, dissipate the clouds, and calm the tempests of the soul," her firmness of purpose, and strength of judgment, when to show her sense of a breach of honour, she left marks of it in her will, in reference to a child who had offended, her modesty and humility, never being puffed up with vanity from her birth, her beauty, or the celebrity she derived from the praises of Petrarch, whom she only sought to lead to heaven by a life of grace!—all these were more than the features of an individual; for they were characteristics of whole generations. Did any one wish to learn in what exactly consisted the becoming? He was referred for instruction to noble women; that soft and susceptible race, possessed intuitively with exquisite acuteness, the secret of all justice. The simple infantine and joyous air of the maidens of the middle ages, is still witnessed, we are told, in those of Spain, whose charms

* Epist. LVII.

† Od. VI. 139.

and graces from being without any mixture of what in France and England is termed education, are said to inspire an unwonted and supreme delight *, as those who have only seen artificial beds of flowers, are enraptured on discovering the wild blossom of the mountains, or the bright, exquisite gem which sparkles on the dark green borders of the sleepless stream. The women of the middle ages sought no power to charm from Tarentine robe, which was a term of reproach even among Gentiles. Byron is struck with somewhat of reverence, as well as delight, at the dress of the Spanish women, when he makes that admirable remark respecting the air of mysticism, and of gaiety, which belongs to them ; and whoever has beheld those beautiful white forms, kneeling like the women of Genoa in Churches, veiled, will have no difficulty in conceiving his emotions.

General simplicity in dress was found compatible with occasional magnificence, as the old poet said of the Dame de Fayel :

“ La Dame s'est tost acesmée,
Car belle dame est tost parée.”

The air of hardy plainness which reigned in all private relations, agreed well with beauty. The daughters of those times had no zone that caught the eye more than the person did, no frontlets as if one wished to deck the sun with jewels. In Church, and in all honourable places, women generally appeared wrapped up in white folds, over which was thrown a long black mantle †. It is thus we find them represented in old glass windows, and miniatures ; and the habit of some orders of nuns is only the same which has remained unchanged. The duties, even the recreations of women, were humble and private. It was, as with the Greeks, in the time of Æschylus, when no women ever went to the theatre, though a foolish tale passed current in later times, respecting their terror on the entrance of the chorus of furies in the Eumenides. Innocent delight and duty went hand in hand, in sweet conformity with the design of nature. The discipline which Cicero ascribes to all cities but Sparta, by which women

* Huber Skizzen aus Spanien, p. 40.

† Ildefons von Arx Geschichten des St. Gallen.

were confined within the shade of walls, and rendered incapable of any active exercise by the softness of their habits, did not prevail in the middle ages. Those who, like Nausicaa, had brothers in the bloom of youth, who always wished to have fresh washed clothes going to the chorus, were led sometimes by the employments that devolved upon them to the margin of rivers and fountains, where the fragrant air, and the lovely aspect of groves and meadows, supplied refreshment, and the pleasure most congenial to innocence. Spinning was another occupation belonging to all women of the middle ages. Shepherdesses spun at cottage doors, listening to romantic tales ; the daughters of citizens spun in their court yards, while some old relative read aloud from a spiritual book ; princesses spun on the balconies of palaces, listening to the music of instruments, or the song of the minstrel ; nuns spun after matins, seated under the arcades of their cloister. The holy queen Adelaide, mother of king Robert, used to take a pride in working with her own hands, in embroidering for the ornaments of churches. Every church and monastery in the middle ages could boast of some delicate work which attested the ingenious skill as well as piety, of the maidens and matrons of the adjoining manor. Upon opening in the abbey of St. Denis, the tomb of Jean de Bourbon, wife of king Charles V., there were found the remains of a crown, a gold ring, and a spindle or distaff of wood gilt, half decayed, the symbol of domestic occupations. Olaus Magnus, Archbishop of Upsal, relates, that “ the women of the North, in point of execution, though perhaps not in the choice of a subject, excelled even the Roman artists in the work of tapestry ; for that even illustrious women, in order to avoid idleness, used to exercise a subtle skill in making as it were hereditary ornaments for their houses *.” The husband, indeed, as in the days of Æschylus, was what Minerva calls the eye of the house, *δωμάτων ἐπίσκοπον* †. Rarely in the middle ages could any man ascribe his everlasting doom, like Rusticucci, if we credit Dante, to the savage temper which rebelled against his just domestic sway. “ Nevertheless,” as Clemens Alexandrinus observes, “ the ring was given to the spouse as a symbol of

* Olaii Magni gentium Septent. Hist. Lib. XIII. c. 9.

† Eumenid. 740.

domestic custody and administration, that she should seal up the things that were in the house *." The husband was not absorbed in domestic engagements ; he had still generosity for his friend, and heroism for the cause of justice. There are few Anthonios in cities that have advanced in the manners of modern civilization, though there may be a sufficient number of Shylocks. Accordingly we find that heroic love entered generally into the marriages of the middle ages. Even in the romances of chivalry, the knights are continually speaking, in their perilous passages, like Turnus to his friends in the moment of danger—

—“ Nunc conjugis esto
Quisque suæ tectique memor : nunc magna referto
Facta patrum laudesque †.”

The spirit which presided over marriages in the middle age was not mercenary nor political, nor choked with ambition of the meaner sort. The maxim of the Pythagoreans, “ to avoid a woman who had gold on her person ‡,” seemed to prevail in all its force. Down to the fourteenth century, in France the dowry of women was a chaplet of roses ; the fortune of men was their worth, their heroism, their spotless honour, or even their learning and wisdom. A dowry was no more essential during the middle ages than it was in Homeric times, when a daughter for being beautiful and expert and prudent, might reckon upon gaining for her husband the best man in wide Troy. “ Hippodameia” says Homer, “ was beloved by her father and mother above all their daughters : ”

— πᾶσαν γὰρ ὁμηλικίην ἐκέκαστο
κάλλει καὶ ἔργοισιν ἵδε φρεσὶ· τοῦνεκα καὶ μιν
γῆμεν ἀνὴρ ὥριστος ἐνὶ Τροίῃ εὐρείη §.

Giroie, sprung from the two noble families of the Francs and Bretons, to whom duke Richard had given the two castles in Normandy, of Montreuil and of Echanfour, while on his journey to find the duke, was received and lodged in the house of Toustain de Mont-

* Clem. Alex. Pedag. Lib. III. c. 2.

† X. 280.

‡ Jamblich de Pythagoric vita, cap. 18.

§ II. XIII. 431.

fort, and having merely seen by chance at dinner Gisèle, the daughter of that knight, without any inquiry he demanded her in marriage from her illustrious parents, and obtained her for his wife *. Such disregard was shown to the interest arising from family connections, that we find the German nobles of the tenth century censured by the fourth Eckehard, Abbot of St. Gall, for choosing wives out of Italy and Greece, to the neglect of the German daughters †. “Virtue is all the dowry that you need leave your daughter,” says Marcilius Ficinus to Berlingherio †. In the fifteenth century, we find the preachers of Italy laying great stress upon observing the ancient simplicity in relation to marriages. Bernardine of Monte Feltro preaching at Tuderta, on the manner of the Christian life, showed the necessity of moderating the dower of daughters, and of renouncing great expenses in the celebration of nuptials §. Moreover, we find that the great importance of attending to spiritual or intellectual interests in the formation of alliances, was not overlooked. Stephen, King of Hungary, sought Gisile, daughter to the emperor Henry, in marriage, but he could not obtain her father’s consent till he had embraced the Christian religion. This was the Stephen who, once converted, turned himself to Christ with all his heart, and became a mirror of all sanctity ||. The traditions of the first ages had perpetuated the spirit of the primitive Christians in this respect even when the occasion for some of these precautions had ceased. The dangers resulting to the Christian woman who should become the wife of a Pagan, are bitterly lamented by St. Cyprian and Tertullian; the latter says, “The husband wishes to go to the bath, the wife wishes to observe the station; the husband gives a banquet, the wife is obliged to fast; and there is never so much to do in the house as when the wife wishes to go to the church. What Pagan,” he asks, “would wish to permit his wife to go about through the villages, to enter strange houses, to visit the brethren, that is, the sick and the poor? Who would wish to permit them to carry water to wash their feet, provisions and drink to offer

* William of Jumièges Hist. du Normand. Lib. VII. c. 11.

† Eckehard in Lib. Bened. 122. † Epist. Lib. VII.

§ Wadd. Ann. Minorum, tom. XIV.

|| Annal. Hirsaugiensis.

them? There are times of persecution too, and who would consent that his wife should visit in secret the prisons in order to kiss the chains of the martyrs?" Then again what new difficulties when Christian daughters were born to the Pagan husband, and Christian sisters to Pagan brothers; for in these mixed marriages, the daughters almost always followed the religion of the mother. Victoria of Abitina, a city near Carthage, made a vow of perpetual chastity, because her father wished to oblige her to marry a Pagan. Then what trials awaited the female slaves who embraced Christianity; what dangers from their masters, and the sons of their masters! When these masters hated Christianity, what a life of misery was theirs! Thus the master of St. Potamienne of Alexandria, being unable to seduce her, denounced her as a Christian to the proconsul Aquila, who condemned her to a cruel punishment. Pagan slaves could find shelter from the fury of their masters in the Pagan temples, but it is evident that Christians could not avail themselves of this resource. The council of Elvira in 305, declares that "the number of young persons who may remain unmarried, cannot excuse those parents who cause Christian virgins to contract a marriage with idolaters." Still there were many such marriages. These Christian women were not excluded the church, but the church did not bless their union with the Pagans, which was but a civil marriage. In short, Christian women, in primitive times, suffered in their pagan homes what many pious Catholic women of the latter ages endure when placed in houses, which, if not Pagan in profession, are such in fact: dependant upon fathers, brothers, husbands, and masters, who either do not profess their faith, or what is perhaps worse, as in France, have contracted a hatred for the very religion which they are supposed to profess *. Now it is true, that such occasions for constancy did but very seldom and partially exist during the middle ages when all the world was united in one religion, and when Christian manners were defended against the few by the force of public opinion. Still whenever occasions did arise, we find that due attention was paid to the intellectual and moral interests in all the relations of do-

* Frederick Munter. *Die Christen in heidnischen Hause.* Copenhagen, 1828.

mestic life. The master of the sentences expressly teaches and shows from the holy fathers, that a marriage ought never to be contracted between those who are of different religions *.

"In choosing a husband," says St. Isidore, "four things are generally regarded, virtue, race, beauty, and wisdom; but of these wisdom is the most effectual to cause love. Thus Dido loved Æneas for his beauty,

‘Quem sese ore ferens ;’

for his virtue,

‘Quam forti pectore et armis ;’

for his wisdom of discourse,

—‘Heu quibus ille
Jactatus fatis, quæ bella exhausta canebat ;’

for his race,

‘Credo equidem, nec vana fides, genus esse Deorum †.’”

Certainly there are not wanting examples in ancient history to show that it was the philosophy, the poetic or literary fame, rather than the beauty of the youth, which won the maiden's heart,—that intellectual enjoyments entered into the idea of love's qualifications, and that the loves of the middle ages resembled those of which the poet sung,

*τῷ σοφίᾳ παρέδρους
παντοίας ἀρετᾶς ξυνέργους ‡.*

Hence we find Marsilius Ficinus telling his young friend, the poet Antonio Pelocta, that marriage will be no impediment to his study of letters, if he lives temperately, and economizes his time §. The husband of the middle ages in fact was looked up to, according to apostolic prescriptions, as the instructor of the house; he was not the husband of the civilization which some modern sophists advocate. He rather resembled the son of Abraham, who introduced the woman that he loved into the tabernacle of Sara, his mother, and took her to be his wife, and so loved her, “ut dolorem, qui ex morte matris ejus acciderat, temperaret ||.”

* Sentent. Lib. IV. dictinet. 39.

† Isidori Etymolog. Lib. IX. c. 8.

§ Marsil. Ficini Epist. Lib. IV.

‡ Eurip. Med. 841.

|| Genes. xxiv. 67.

Here my discourse might recal the song which Dante heard in the region where spirits are made pure, that

“ Many a pair extoll’d,
Who lived in virtue chastely, and the bonds
Of wedded love*.”

Roger, king of Sicily, was reduced to such a state of bitter affliction on the death of his wife Alberia, that for a long time he shut himself up in his private rooms, and would see no one but his familiar servants, so that it became the general opinion of men, both far and near, that he had died, and some nobles made an insurrection; and whoever affirmed that he was still alive was laughed at†.

We cannot enter any of our ancient cathedral or monastic churches, without meeting some monument proclaiming, in terms more or less beautiful, the tenderness and constancy of the same affection during the middle ages. The love of the celebrated Balthazar Castiglione for his wife, is thus expressed in the inscription which he caused to be placed upon her tomb, in the church of S. Maria delle Grazie, near Mantua :

“ Non ego nunc vivo, conjux dulcissima ; vitam
Corpore namque tuo fata meam abstulerunt ;
Sed vivam, tumulo cum tecum condar in isto,
Jungenturque tuis ossibus ossa mea.”

I have recorded the affection of men; but what shall I say of the woman’s love? Blanca Rubea, of Padua, having fallen into the hands of the tyrant Eccelino, when the fortress was taken, in defending which her husband had been slain, sought to escape by throwing herself from a window, but was reserved to give an example to all future ages of heroic perseverance; for when his crime was consummated, after all attempts to corrupt her mind had failed, dissembling her grief, she demanded permission to view once more the remains of her husband; and entering the sepulchre, where bloody and yet but green in earth he lay festering in his shroud, she resolved, as if unsubstantial death were amorous, and that the lean, abhorred monster kept him there in dark to be her para-

* Purg. XXV.

† Alexand. Abbat. de reb. gestis Rogerii, Lib. III. c. 1. Rer. Italic. Scriptor. tom. V.

mour, to stay with him, and never from that place of dim night depart again. Bidding her eyes to look their last, she cast herself with such force upon the corpse, now half dissolved upon the cold stone, that her arms took their last embrace, and with a kiss she died *.

Veronica da Gambera, a poetess and patroness of learning, daughter of Count Gian-Francesco Gambera, was married to Gilberto, the tenth lord of Corregio, whom she lost nine years after their marriage, when she was scarcely thirty-three years of age. She caused to be engraven on the door of her apartment these beautiful lines:

“ Ille meos primus qui me sibi junxit amores
Abstulit, ille habeat secum servetque sepulcro.”

Orlandini, gonfalonier of justice at Florence, meditated deadly vengeance against Balbaccio, a brave warrior of the republic, for having expressed indignation at his cowardice in flying from Marradi on the invasion of Piccinnino. The gonfalonier concealed the assassins in his chamber, where Balbaccio came every day to receive his orders. Orlandini conversing familiarly, walked with him to the fatal spot at the end of the room, then gave the signal, when the assassins rushed out and dispatched him. His body was thrown out of the window, and afterwards exposed to the people. His widow, Anne, devoted herself, from that moment, to a life of religion. She changed her house into a monastery, and shutting herself up there with many noble women, continued there till her death, which was in odour of sanctity. “ This monastery,” adds Machiavel, “ which bears her name, will perpetuate her memory till the end of time †.”

The horror which was inspired by every violation of this union, shows what was the general opinion and practice of those times. Many memorable scenes were the result of these contrasts. Let us imagine ourselves present at the Council of Rheims, at which Pope Calixtus the Second assisted, and mark what takes place on the third day. Hildegarde, countess of Poictiers, enters with a numerous suite of ladies and guards; she is a princess of great beauty, of about thirty years of age; tears stand in her eyes, which she wipes away from time to

* Bernardini Scardeonii Hist. Patavinæ Thesaur. Antiq. Ital. tom. VI.

† Hist. of Florence, Lib. VI.

time. She makes an eloquent and feeling harangue, complaining that her husband has forsaken her, to the great scandal of the church. The whole assembly is moved to compassion. The Pope asks if the Count is present, conformable to the order sent to him to attend ; the bishop of Saintes explains the reason of his prince's absence, who has been delayed on his road by sickness. The Pope then fixes a time for him to appear to hear his sentence of excommunication, unless he should take back his countess. The love and respect of which women generally were the objects during the middle ages, might alone be deemed a sufficient proof of the eminent sense of virtue and justice which belongs to them.

At the time of the Crusades, when the armies of Europe were to assist at the spectacle of Mahometan manners and of the religion of sense, there was reason to fear that their condition in that respect might suffer a sad reverse ; but, as a French writer remarks, it was precisely at that epoch, when the sweet and persuasive voice of St. Bernard, celebrating the praise of Mary, furnished an antidote to the fascination of the ancient Oriental serpent, and offered to its impure seduction the enthusiasm of chivalrous love. There are single deeds which show the general spirit of these times, and which we find upon every tongue, as symbols of universal duty, where knightly or manly virtue was the theme. Such was the act of Bruce, to which Isabella alludes, in the poem of the Lord of the Isles.

“ Robert! I have seen
 Thou hast a woman’s guardian been !
 Even in extremity’s dread hour,
 When press’d on thee the Southern power,
 And safety, to all human sight,
 Was only found in rapid flight,
 Thou heard’st a wretched female plain
 In agony of travail pain,
 And thou didst bid thy little band
 Upon the instant turn and stand,
 And dare the worst the foe might do,
 Rather than, like a knight untrue,
 Leave to pursuers merciless
 A woman in her last distress*.”

While the Church protected women from injury, the laws of the state contributed to preserve in society the delicate impressions of respect which were their due, and punished any insult by severe penalties. When grave and austere magistrates came forward, like Stephen Pasquier, declaring that they would rather incur any censure than resemble John de Mehun, who, in his romance of the Rose, had professed expressly to despise women*, it cannot excite surprise to find knights and noblemen resisting as personal outrage, the publication of any thing that tended to weaken the faith in female virtue.

The learned and amiable Antony Woodville, earl of Rivers, had translated from the French “The Dictes and Sayings of the Philosophers,” in which he left out some strictures on women, that were in the original. These Caxton translated, inserting them as an appendix to his printed edition, with many apologies for the correction. “I did not presume,” he says, “to put them in my said lord’s book, but in the end apart, in the rehearsal of the works, that Lord Rivers, or any other person, if they be not pleased may erase it, or else rend the leaf out of the book, humbly beseeching my said lord to take no displeasure on me so presuming.”

Alas, reader, how strange, how extravagant and absurd, perhaps, will this sound in the ears of many at present, whom like deaf adders, the harmonious voice of exquisite sentiment can no longer charm? The leaf which our fathers would have torn out and trampled upon with indignation, would now be thought the sweetest and most attractive page that could be presented to any eye. Erase it, indeed, or else rend it out of the book! Such counsel is no longer in harmony with our opinions or our manners. It was for the gentle ones of Catholic times to follow it, who were taught nothing else in philosophy, in literature, in poetry, in painting, and in the whole development and order of society, but that from woman arose upon them the sun of justice,—Christ their God. It was for the men of the middle ages to feel that scorn, who beheld woman, angel-like, leading youth hand in hand to heaven, meanwhile distributing on earth the palms of virtue, as arbitress and judge. It

* *Recherches de la France*, Lib. VI. 34.

was for them to feel indignant, who could from experience and conviction say of woman,

“ All higher knowledge in her presence falls
Degraded ; wisdom in discourse with her
Loses discountenanced, and like folly shows.”

No, Caxton, thy book is safe at present, come what may hereafter. Onward let us pass.

CHAPTER IV.

THE shadowy forms that are now before us, indicate that we are come to a scene that may for me be termed the passage perilous, of which old fables speak. Love, that in gentle hearts is quickly learnt, pleased so passing well the heroic ages of which I tell the manners, that, as thou perceivest, reader, I cannot pursue my journey without beholding it; for the image is too intimately connected with the times I describe, to be excluded from any picture that would faithfully represent them. Nevertheless, though with downward looks, we have encouragement to proceed; for if, by sweet thoughts and fond desire many to an evil pass were destined, there were others, and doubtless not a few in these simple ages, whose smiles or sighs can be remembered without exciting grief or pity.

In the vain fabling of the ancients, the distinctions of nature are often truly indicated. “ Love,” says Plato, “ is not one person, but there are two loves, the one elder and born without a mother, the daughter of Ouranus, the most ancient of all the gods, and we call this Uranian love; but the other younger, daughter of Jupiter and Dione, which we call public or common, and this of itself is neither good nor evil, but it may be either, according as it is accompanied ; and thus all love is not fair or worthy to be praised. The common love is what

belongs to the evil part of men, who have no regard to what is well or otherwise, but regard only their senses, whereas the elder love binds men to the soul. The former, which regards the body rather than the soul, is evil, for it is not durable, being related to a matter which is not durable, ceasing with its departure, and containing in itself nothing fixed or permanent unless the total want of generous friendship*.” We find this distinction as clearly pointed out by the writers of the middle ages, though differently expressed. In allusion to the latter, Richard of St. Victor uses an image, which Dante seems to have copied in his representations of hell; for he says, “men hate in loving, and love in hating; and in a wondrous and wretched manner, hate grows from desire and desire from hate. Fire and hail mixed are their portion. And what is this but a certain form of future damnation, where spirits pass from the heat of fire to the cold of snow, and from the cold of snow to the heat of fire? When the human mind is drawn violently to this state of love, nothing remains but that it should be prayed for by others, if perchance the Lord, looking on their faith, should restore the dead to life †.” On the other hand, speaking of the former, the same great master observes, “than the sweetness of love nothing is found pleasanter, nothing from which the mind derives a more lively joy ‡.” If this were not a matter on which faith had thrown a new light, there would have been, however, no necessity for our approaching these dangerous and doubtful limits. But during the middle ages there is a wondrous change to be remarked in the development and exercise of human passions; for the love which Plato rejects, seemed to have then acquired many qualities which before had been exclusively possessed by that which he called the older or Uranian love. Like it, this passion of the sentient nature bound men to the soul, and contained in itself something durable, being allied to a generous and immortal friendship. Nay, like that which was amongst the oldest of things, it was capable of becoming, as Phædrus says, “a cause of the greatest good to men.”

In the first place, it was associated with that restora-

* Conviv. 9. 10.

† Rich. de S. Vict. Tractat. de quatuor gradibus violentæ charitatis, I.

‡ De Trinitate, I. III. 14.

tion of the dignity and happiness of the female sex, which had been effected by the Christian faith, and by the discipline and laws of the Catholic Church. Plutarch says, in one of his moral works, that "as for true love, women have no part in it;" and Montesquieu observes that Plutarch speaks the universal opinion of his age. What language! what an age! Moreover, we find that immediately on the diffusion of the Christian faith, love became associated with the hopes of a future and immortal existence, as may be witnessed in the visions of Hermas, who records the recollections of his early love; and describes his seeing the heavens open, as he knelt one day praying in a meadow, and beholding the maid whom he had loved looking out of the clouds to salute him. Truly there was a justice in love, which under the divine forms of the Catholic religion, gave rise to ineffable relations that did so evenly temper passion within mortal breasts, it ne'er could warp to any wrongfulness. From the day when first discourse was heard of the revered sire, before whom knelt the maiden who had heard the secret vow of faithful and devoted affection, earthly things seemed joined to divine in a still more intimate manner than they had ever been before in the hearts of the young. The dulcet strains of holy choirs, which had even in childhood thrilled them, acquired a deeper and still sweeter sense, and the *vitam venturi sæculi*, thrice shouted forth in solemn harmony, was like an authoritative voice proclaiming that they espoused a loveliness that was to be in bliss and safety everlasting. To be convinced that this union between the two loves had been realised, we need only consult any of the popular writers or poets of the middle age, who seem to know of no love which was not a principle of virtue, or almost a source of sanctification to the soul. Love in the sense of chivalrous manners co-operated with religion in making men despise riches and earthly grandeur, and submit cheerfully to a life of hardship, and cultivate that noble spirit of sacrifice which plays such an important part in the whole of Catholic life. That reply to Juliet would have found an echo in every youthful breast,

"Let me be ta'en, let me be put to death;
I am content if thou wilt have it so:
I have more care to stay than will to go:
Come death and welcome! Juliet wills it so."

Huber says that in the young Spaniard who would render himself amiable in the common walks of life, moderation and temperance in every thing are an indispensable qualification. Avarice, or what the Spaniards name Miseria, would not dishonour him more than drunkenness or effeminacy. If you will credit writers of the middle ages, love made young men gentle and humble, devoted and generous. They will tell you that there moved a hidden virtue from the heart of woman which, like a heavenly influence, prompted them to everything well and fair; that as the partiality or peculiar devotion for particular altars or chapels evinced by the angelic maiden, seemed to enhance the reverence of those who loved them for the same, so did they cast a perfume, an air of paradise over the most ordinary actions. The ancient writers love to remark how the Catholic religion supplied the young as they passed on through the different stages and relations of life, at the entrance of every new sphere, with some principle, the observance of which was calculated to endear them to others. The working of these divine wheels produced sweet music, ever varied and alike unearthly, even when it seemed to attach men by fresh bonds to the earth. It made them assiduous scholars, joyous and generous companions, disinterested and faithful lovers, affectionate husbands, benignant and wise fathers, courageous and free subjects, merciful and just rulers, and by domestic virtues secured the public tranquillity; for fearful is the void left in society when, in place of the loving and gentle affections, the sweet charities, the amiable relations of life, springing from the experienced or remembered love of young hearts, is substituted cold and passionless reason, or hatred like that of demons, and pride such as reigned in fallen angels plotting to be gods. What renders, however, the love of the middle ages, a phenomenon wholly unprecedented in the moral history of man, was the supernatural tone which was imparted to it by faith in the doctrines of the Catholic religion.

"I bless the happy moment," says Petrarch, "that directed my heart to Laura. She led me to see the path of virtue, to detach my heart from base and grovelling objects; from her I am inspired with that celestial flame which raises my soul to heaven, and directs it to the

Supreme Cause, as the only source of happiness.” If Plutarch, in the passage formerly quoted, speaks the sense of his contemporaries, it is not less true that Petrarch, in these words, expresses the opinion of the middle ages, with regard to the nature and consequences of love. After reading the works of Richard of St. Victor, and other great contemplatists of that time, one might suppose that love could not be severed from charity, which is the destruction of all vices. The maiden that was chosen by the heroic youth of those times, she to whom he would plight his troth, though to have her and death were both one thing, had always a chaplet in her hands, and as she smiled, her thoughts seemed ever fixed upon the joy of angels. She would have given counsel like Beatrice to Dante, when he beheld her with such rapture of celestial bliss, that affection found no room for other wish.

“ Vanquishing me with a beam
Of her soft smile, she spake: ‘ Turn thee, and list:
These eyes are not thy only paradise*.’ ”

In love all her wish was innocence, all her thoughts were prayer :

“ I have need of many orisons
To move the heavens to smile upon my state,
Which well thou know’st is cross and full of sin.”

Such is the timid language of that love which inspired the genius of the middle ages ; for hear the great master who represents it, and who was himself its most glorious image, “ Love awakens and excites us; it gives us wings to fly to the highest regions, and oft its burning flame is the first stage, where the soul, ill at ease here below, rises to the Creator. All its desires are lofty; it can purify the soul.” It is thus that Michael Angelo conceives the love of woman†. And who need be reminded of the noble sense in which the bards of chivalry and the authors of knightly romance understood love? It is their sentiment which is expressed by the modern poet:

* Parad. XVIII.

† Sonnets.

" Time tempers love, but not removes,
More hallow'd when its hope is fled:
Oh ! what are thousand living loves
To that which cannot quit the dead ?"

In the palmerin of England, the knight of death, when he had lost his fair love, would still always carry about her image, at the sight of which he went forth to his adventures, with as lively a regard to her honour as though she still smiled upon him.

If you would estimate the sensibility of the middle ages, and learn what impressions affection caused in them, you should hear some tale of death in love, attached to their simple annals. " Come forth, thou fearful man," says the friar in Shakspeare, speaking in the very spirit of those days, " affliction is enamoured of thy parts, and thou art wedded to calamity." But amidst this profound woe, what consolation had they in their faith ! Their love was associated with images of celestial brightness and eternal beatitude. Let us hear Dante, speaking of himself in his *Vita Nuova*, " Some days afterwards I experienced a painful infirmity. I suffered from it unceasingly during many days, so that I became weak, and like those who cannot move themselves. On the ninth day, during an almost intolerable pain, it occurred to me to think of the lady that I loved. When I had dreamt of her some time, I began to think of my weakened life, and seeing how uncertain was its course, even were I to be in perfect health, I began to lament within myself all such misery. Then after a deep sigh, I said to myself, ' Of necessity the lovely Beatrice must die some time or other ; ' and then such a wandering of ideas seized me, that I closed my eyes, and began to labour like one in phrenzy, and to fancy a thousand things. During this delirium, figures of women with dishevelled hair, appeared to me, saying, ' you also will die ; ' and then other figures still more horrible presented themselves, and said to me, ' you are dead.' My imagination having begun to wander, I at length no longer knew where I was, and I seemed to behold women walking, with their hair floating down, weeping and lamenting ; and the sun seemed to be obscured, and the stars to become of such a colour that I thought they were in mourning. Amazed and terrified at this vision, I thought that a friend came to me and said, ' do you not know that your admirable lady is

departed from this world ?' Then I began to weep bitterly, and not only did I weep in imagination, but I wept with a flood of real tears. I thought that I looked up to heaven, and that I saw a multitude of angels, who were returning up thither, and had before them a cloud very white ; and I thought that the angels sung a glorious hymn, and that I could hear the words of their chaunt, hosanna in excelsis, and that I could hear nothing more. Then it seemed as if my heart said to me, 'it is true—our well-beloved lady is dead.' And I thought then that I went to see the body in which this noble and blessed soul had dwelt, and this deceitful imagination, which showed me my lady dead, was so strong, that it seemed as if I saw the women who covered her head with a white veil, and it seemed to me that her countenance had such an air of humility, that I thought I heard her say, 'I behold the principle of sovereign peace.' In this imagination I called to her, saying, 'dear departed one, come to me, be not cruel, come to me who deserveth you so much, and who already, as you see, weareth your colours.' And when I had seen all the sorrowful offices discharged, which are due to inanimate bodies, I thought that I returned to my chamber, and that from thence I looked up to heaven ; and my illusion was so great that I began to say aloud, 'O beautiful soul ! how blessed is he who seeth thee !'"

The love of the middle ages is now ranked among the follies and eccentricities of an epoch that was immersed in darkness and barbarism. Nevertheless, I shall relate somewhat from its traditions and records, though my discourse should seem like an old tale, which will have matter still to rehearse, though credit be asleep, and not an ear open.

"When king Gyron le Courtois, king Melyadus, another knight, and a certain maiden, had come to the spot in the forest where the young knight was slain, they found his body stretched across the road, his hand still grasping his sword, and his helmet on his head. All the road was deep in blood about him. Then the maiden alighted and went gently up to him, and took off his helmet, and his mouth was full of blood. So after gazing on him for a long time with a distracted look, she burst into tears, and said, "Ah, beauteous friend, how dearly hast thou paid for my love ! The good and the joy which thou hast had from me have been only sad and bitter death : beau-

teous friend, courteous and wise, valiant, heroic, good knight in every guise, since thou hast lost thy youth for me in this manner, in this strait, and in this agony, as it clearly appears, what else remains for me to suffer for thy sake, unless that I should keep you company? Friend, friend, thy beauty is departed for the love of me; thy flesh lies here bloody. Friend, friend, we were both nourished together. I knew not what love was when I gave my heart to love thee. Thee only will I love without fail, and besides thee no other, and certainly I know that thou didst love only me. Young friend, thou wert my joy and my consolation; for to see thee and to speak to thee alone was sufficient to inspire joy. Friend, whilst alive, thou wert mine in will, and it is clear that thou wert also mine at death. Friend, what I behold slays me; I feel that death is within my heart." Then taking up his sword, she kissed it, and holding it in her hands, turned to Melyadus, and implored him that he would have the knight buried on that spot, and that he would have her body placed by his side in the grave. "How, in God's name," said the king, "what mean you? Do I not behold you in good health, and fair, so as to surpass all the maidens upon earth?" "Sire," she replied, "you do not feel what I feel. My sorrow is greater than you suppose. I know of a certainty that I shall die this day, and will you promise me, in God's name, to grant me this prayer?" The king, all amazed and concerned, replied, "Truly I cannot believe that it should happen as you say; but if it should be so, which God avert, I will have your wish fulfilled." Then turning to Gyron, they talked together concerning the slain knight, while the maiden knelt down over the body, and kissed the sword, which she held firm in her hands, as she gazed upon him. When Gyron perceived that she remained so long without moving, he cried out to the king, "Sire, wouldest thou behold the strangest marvel that thou hast ever seen since thou wert born?" "Yea, that **would I**; show it to me," replied Melyadus. "In God's name, then, thou shalt see it; approach that maiden, and thou wilt find that she has died of grief." "Impossible!" exclaimed the king. "Nay, but it is so," said Gyron, "or never believe me more." And the king, who could not believe him, came up to the maiden, and certainly of a truth he then saw clearly enough that

she was dead, and he signed himself on witnessing this wondrous sight. The other knight also signed himself with the sign of the cross. "Well," said the king, "it is even so. Sooth, one can say with safety that the maid loved truly, and with great love; for she hath died for him." "It is so," said Gyron, "now can there be from this event, a strange tale henceforth told. I will compose a lay, and a new chaunt, which shall be recorded and sung after our death, in many foreign kingdoms. Let us at present provide for their burial; but how shall we discover their names, that we may write them on their tomb?" "We can only learn that," replied Melyadus, "by riding to the castle yonder, which is called le Chastel Ygerve, where they were both born, for they were born both in one castle, and they were nourished together." So to that castle they rode, and alighting, were received and instructed as to the name of the knight, which was Absalon, and of the maiden, which was Cesala, and Gyron made a lay, which is still known as "the lay of the two lovers *."

You perceive, reader, how justice is expressly brought forward here as the principle of this devoted affection, which requires the offering of life for life. Now this constancy in love, and the faith which could receive such testimony of it as credible, belong, in a most remarkable degree, to the manners of the middle age, so as to be found even in men whom all things else abandon. "With one solitary exception, all misfortunes that flesh is heir to have been visited on me," says the unhappy Jordano Bruno, in the dedication of a poem to Sir Philip Sidney, who received him into his house when he visited London as a wandering, homeless exile. "I have tasted every kind of calamity but one, that of finding false a woman's love!"

The manners of Spain, till lately at least, were said, among other characteristic features of the middle age, to have retained this fidelity. "As it may be well imagined," says Huber, "women, and through them, love, occupy a very important place in the social life of the Spaniards. Love, and the conversation of women in Spain, imply neither foppish gallantry and cold calculation, as in France, nor rude sensuality, and defined, faithless for-

* Gyron le Courtois, f. CCIX.

mality, as amongst northern nations ; but on the contrary, the real emotions of the guileless heart, ever earnest, reciprocal, true, and holy *.”

We have seen the fair side ; let us reverse the medal :

“ Oh ! how this spring of love resembleth
The uncertain glory of an April day ;
Which now shows all the beauty of the sun,
And by and by a cloud takes all away !”

Reader, from what source descend the greatest evils into the bosom, whence the rib was taken, to fashion that fair cheek, whose taste all the world pays for, even Gentiles in their fabling shewed ?

Love, exceeding measure, brings neither glory nor virtue to men †.

Φεῦ, Φ ὕ, βροτοῖς ἔρωτες ὡς κακὸν μέγα ‡.

Why seem these eyes created only to devour an eternal tear ? What men are these with minds which appear the echo of all the melancholies that are in nature ? Love, abandoned to itself, hath done this. They sought a balm, and they found a poison ; they sought their dream, on rising from their couch, and they found the wound in their heart ; they sought for rest, and found the tempest ; they sought the way of their young years, and they found the way of eternal grief. Alack ! alack ! that fond nature should disdain counsel, rush headlong to its ruin, and then, forsooth, complain that heaven should practise stratagems upon so soft a subject as itself ! Reader, wouldest thou hear a piteous predicament, some moving story of deep love ? Open any of the domestic histories of the middle age, visit the abbeys of Cluny, or Citeaux, and search into the past life of the convertites who mourn there, and then if thou art a poet, thou wilt not depart unsatisfied ; only be pitiful ; let not the force of vulgar speech move thee to scorn, but bend thine eyes down, as if to view memorials of the buried, drawn upon earth-level tombs. Remember, that if the world for human passions, be all temptation, and yet all severity, the converse marks the Church, which is all prevention ; and on the other hand, all forgiveness. Nay, ere you leave her sanctuaries for penitence prepared, there may perhaps be found some aged father, who has had long experience and deep know-

* Skizzen aus Spanien. XXVI.

† Eurip. Med. 627.

‡ Id. 331.

ledge of the minds of men, who will intimate to you, by tears and looks significant, that those old writers whom your great poet speaks of, uttered truth in saying, “as in the sweetest bud the eating canker dwells, so eating love inhabits in the finest wits of all.”

Dante marks the distinction well, when of love he says,

“ —— While e'er it seeks
 The primal blessings, or with measure due
 The inferior, no delight, that flows from it
 Partakes of ill. But let it warp to evil,
 Or with more ardour than behoves, or less
 Pursue the good ; the thing created then
 Works 'gainst its Maker *.”

Doubtless, where love was suffered to grow up without restraint or guidance, where it was not sanctified by the principles and hopes of faith, the result could only have resembled that which Ahasverus, in the fable, confesses having experienced. “In all my joys,” he says, “there is pain at the bottom ; and this pain is so bitter, that no sweets of love can remove the taste. I thought that would pass, and it has only increased ; I sought to adore her that I loved in all things. If I heard the brook murmur, I used to say, it is her sigh ; if I saw the deep abyss, I would say, it is her heart ; of the clouds and stars, and of the breath of evening, I made an eternal Rachel. For give me if I confess the truth. This fervour, which I recall to mind, is now my despair. All this world has passed ; it has withered on my heart.”

Dante represents Beatrice as reproaching him for having overlooked the true destiny of love.

“ — When from flesh
 To spirit I had risen, and increase
 Of beauty and of virtue circled me,
 I was less dear to him, and valued less.
 His steps were turn'd into deceitful ways,
 Following false images of good, that make
 No promise perfect †.”

Yet old history is not without moving narratives which prove that even in such cases there was often something

* Purg. XVII.

† Id. XXX.

gained, as when men learned to add, with an effectual desire after justice, “O, if I could know what it was to be loved by heaven! O, if I could taste divine love! For it is a force stronger than mine, which impels me to love more than with love, and to lose myself in that sea of Christ which they say is deep enough to receive to rest innumerable souls, and all their remembrances with them.” Search the annals of religious orders, search the particular history of each abbey, and there you will find what was the end of that thirst, the source of so many tales of poesy and woe,—the names of Antonius Santaranensis, James of Tuderto, Raymund Lullus, the Abbot de Rancy, are as familiar to the cloister, as they were once to bower and hall.

“I have seen vain love,” says a saint of the desert, “made occasion of penance, and the same love transferred to God; love excluded by love, and fire extinguished by fire *.” It was these victims who became the fervent penitents. What do I say? they became the poets who, like Jacoponus, have left to the Church, chants of seraphs and hymns, that breathe heaven. Ah me! they seem to cry each moment, “How sweet is love, itself possest, when but love’s shadows are so rich in joy!”

CHAPTER V.

ANNUNTIAVERUNT opera Dei, thus chanted voices when I prepared to move onwards. Et facta ejus intellexerunt, others added in responsive strain, while I saw a crowd who sat apart with such effulgence crowned, as send forth beauteous things eternal. These had all been separate to the Church; these had all pleased God in their days, and had been found just. They had trusted in the Lord, and

* St. John Climac. Grad. XV.

had preached his precepts, and had turned men to justice, and had been heard from the holy mountain.

Attend now, reader, and mark intently as thou canst, whilst I endeavour to unfold a grand historic page, and show what was the institution, character, action, and influence of the clergy, in relation to the fulfilment of the divine promise, to those who hungered and thirsted after God.

The ecclesiastical discipline which imposed celibacy on all who ministered at the altar, originated in the motives alleged by the apostle of the nations, the justice, and irresistible weight, of which might be collected out of the mouths even of those adversaries, who in different ages of the Church, have pretended that the reasons which prescribe its abolition, would rather sink the scale. The remark of Anselm de Bagadio, Bishop of Lucca, in the time of Gregory VII. that the deficiency of the clergy of Milan, in preaching and other good works, must arise from their being married (an abuse which under the direction of the Roman pontiffs, along with St. Ariaud, and St. Herlembald, he was appointed to correct), is sufficient to disprove all the arguments of the historian Landulph, who incautiously records it, even had he not so grossly falsified the doctrine of antiquity, in order to prove that marriage had been permitted to his clergy by St. Ambrose *. At the first, this discipline could not have appeared new or paradoxical to the Gentile philosophers, who had consulted the early traditions, or had paid attention to the condition and phenomena of human life. St. Augustine remarks in his book, "De Vera Religione," that Plato chose a life of celibacy merely from philosophic speculations.

The Greek poet speaks of the advantages of men, who are without the marriage state, and says, that "those who are not fathers of children, not knowing whether it be sweet or bitter to possess them, however unhappy in this ignorance, are yet delivered from many labours." But he adds, "I behold those in whose houses there is this sweet fruit, oppressed with cares unceasingly; first with respect to the manner in which they should educate them, and then as to their means of leaving them a provision,

* Muratori in Landulph. Prolegomena, Rer. Ital. Script. tom. IV.

while after all, it is uncertain whether they undergo all this labour for those that will prove good or evil *.” The old Roman authors gave a definition, fanciful, it is true, of the word expressing an unmarried life, tracing it from that which expressed a celestial life, delivered from the burden of earthly cares †.

Of the objection founded upon political reasons, it is needless to speak: for the arguments of those who adduce it are generally involved in such contradiction, that they refute themselves, as in the work entitled, “New Principles of Political Economy,” by Sismondi, one part of which is devoted to attacking ecclesiastical celibacy, and the other to proving the necessity of interdicting marriage to the poor.

After a review of the ancient states, and the changes wrought by Christianity, some have come to the conclusion of Rubichon, that a clergy, under the discipline of celibacy, with its property and its different relations, were the conditions of existence of modern society ‡. He that was sent affirms, it is better to adopt the state which the Church sanctions; those who speak on their own authority, denied that it was.

The moral difficulties which are said to oppose the discipline of the Church, though they may have a greater show of reality, were not deemed sufficient to justify its abrogation. Louis of Blois meets, in limine, those who think them insurmountable, and speaks as if experience and common sense were sufficient to disprove their assertions. “They say,” he observes, “that they cannot live continently; but they do not say the truth; for they received reason and free will from God, and his grace is never wanting to the humble §.” It is curious to find the heathen moralist appealing to experience, in order to disprove the proposition which Luther maintained; for speaking of sensual pleasures, Cicero says, “ab iisque abstinere minime esse difficile, si aut valetudo, aut officium, aut fama postulet ||.” Had other objections which seem of some weight in the modern schools, been brought forward in days of the old learning, their supporters

* Eurip. Medea, 1088.

† Quintil. Lib. II.

‡ Du Mécanisme de la Société en France et en Angleterre,
272.

§ Epist. ad Florentium.

|| Tuscul. Lib. V. 33.

would not have been treated with more respect than were the old men condemned by Cephalus in the republic of Plato, who regretted the pleasures of their past youth, and seemed quite indignant at being deprived of great things, thinking that before they had lived as men ought to live, *νῦν δὲ οὐδὲ ξῶντες*. It would have been deemed a sufficient answer to reply to such protesters, in the words of Sophocles; *εὐφήμει, ὡς ἀνθρώπε, ἀσμενέστατα μέντοι αὐτὸς ἀπέφυγον, ὥσπερ λυττῶντα τίνα καὶ ἄγριον δεσπότην ἀποφυγών**.

“Certainly, it is not I who will speak against marriage,” says a modern French historian, “this state also has its sanctity. Nevertheless, would not the virginal union of the priest and the Church be troubled by a marriage less pure? Would the mystic paternity hold against the natural? Even if he were to accomplish all the works of the priesthood, could he then preserve its spirit? No; there is in the holiest marriage something which softens the iron, and bends the steel; the firmest heart loses something of itself. And this poesy of solitude, those manly pleasures of abstinence, that plenitude of charity, and of life, when the soul embraces God and the world, can all this as easily subsist in the conjugal state? Without doubt, there is a pious emotion on beholding the cradle of one’s child; but where are the solitary meditations, the mysterious dreams, the sublime tempests, in which combatted within us God and man †?” Such thoughts may seem proper food for the peculiar kind of merriment which used to be so extremely offensive to Johnson, though “the sad priest” would have seen in them the testimony of reason, to the wisdom of that choice with which the sacred Scriptures have associated the promise of an inheritance better than sons and daughters ‡,” and to which philosophy may ascribe a multiplied return, even to those who still wear mortal flesh; for as Tieck declares, through the lips of a certain stout and deep-souled Baron, “there are in life a great many sorts of happiness to be consumed.”

As early as the fourth century, we find the clergy externally distinguished from the laity by their dress §.

Pope St. Stephen, in the reign of the emperors Vale-

* Lib. I.

† Michelet. Hist. de France, II. 109.

‡ Isaiah lvi.

§ Joan. Devoti Instit. Canonic. Lib. I. tit. 1.

rian and Gallienus, ordained that priests and deacons should never use their sacred vestments excepting in the Church. During the middle ages, the secular clergy did not exclusively wear black habits. It appears from a bequest in the Testament of Nicolas Flamel, of cloth for the clergy, and also from old banners in churches, and ancient paintings, that priests wore at pleasure cassocks of black or brown, or of bluish cloth.

Clerks bore the tonsure as serfs of God ; for only the chiefs of the Franks could let their hair grow long, and the rest were shorn. It was an ancient usage among the Romans to wear short hair. The Barbarians wore long hair. The Jews imitated the Romans. When the Gentiles were admitted into the Church, it was usual to cut the hair of all such as entered among the clergy. Some have supposed, that the tonsure originated with the penitents, from whom the monks adopted it ; and that thence it passed to the clergy, who desired to imitate the monastic state *. The clerical tonsure became of three kinds ; there was the tonsure of St. Peter, prevailing in the west, which left a circlet of hair like a crown ; the tonsure of St. Paul, leaving no circlet, which prevailed in the east, and with the Greek monks, of which Bede speaks, saying, "that the monk Theodore came into England with the tonsure of St. Paul, and that he had to wait till his hair grew, before he could appear with the crown." Finally, the Britons, Picts, and Irish, had another tonsure, wearing only a half circle of hair on the fore part of the head.

Objects which we beheld formerly, in relation to the duties of the blessed meek, present themselves again in this place, as connected with the accomplishment of justice. Formed to war against the huge army of the world's desires, the soldiers of Christ were spread throughout the whole social state in such a manner, that their action mig^t produce the greatest effect, being both diversified to suit the variety of degrees, and united in order to maintain the efficacy of the whole. "As God is a God of order, it is of consequence," says Leibnitz, "that to the body of the one Catholic and apostolic Church, there should be one supreme spiritual Magistrate, with directorial power for accomplishing all things

* G. Devoti Instit. Can. I. 1.

necessary for the safety of the Church *.” The Church was a monarchy. “The Papal state,” says the celebrated Gerson, “is instituted by Christ, supernaturally and immediately, as having a monarchal and regal primacy in the ecclesiastical hierarchy, according to which one and supreme state, the Church militant, is called one under Christ, which primacy whoever presumes to impugn, or to diminish, or to make equal to any other peculiar ecclesiastical state, if he should do this pertinaciously, is a heretic, a schismatic, a man impious and sacrilegious †.” As far as veneration is implied, this is not merely the language of that school in which learned the defenders of the Vatican. Pasquier, who goes so far in defending what were termed “the liberties of the Gallican Church,” as to declare that he esteems him as a heretic who thinks that the kings of France are not established by God to command their subjects absolutely ‡,” Pasquier, who would transfer to French bishops the power that could only be exercised by him who was perpetually free, and independent §, who speaks of the most odious acts of Philip-le-Vel, against Boniface, as having been mitigated and reversed, “by a liberality truly French,” who would support the pretension of the French kings which affirmed, that if they received any one at their table, he ought to be received by the priests into the communion of the faithful, that those whom the piety of the prince embraced, should not be rejected by the Church as heathens ||, Pasquier, who thinks that as the disputes between the senate and the tribunes, in the old times of Rome, were the means of retaining both in their proper limits, so the disputes between the Gallicans of the university of Paris, and the Romans were beneficial to the church, the consulship of which was in the city of Rome, while the tribunes were in France ¶, even this Gallican magistrate professes a profound veneration for the Holy See. “As far as regards myself,” he says, “I wish it to be known, that I respect and honour the Holy See of Rome, not to gain any personal advantage, by any act injurious to the honour of

* Leibnitz. Epist. VIII. tom. I.

† De Statu. Sum. Pont. Consid. I.

‡ Recherches de la France, Lib. III. 17.

§ Id. III. 36.

|| III. 18.

¶ III. 29. 44.

my country, but after the old fashion of Gaul, and in the same manner as our ancestors have done. And I have made the above discourse, not from any ill will which I nourish against the Holy See, rather may God visit me with death, but to show that our king bears his safe conduct with his crown *.”

The See of Rome being like a common butt, against which many people let fly their arrows, the heresy of Luther and Calvin, and at present the race of sophists discarding all religion, inviting them to it as to a feast, it may be well to pause a moment, though we partially examined this point in former books, in order, by a few rapid glances to detect the prodigious solidity and extent of the foundations on which rested the doctrine of its power.

“The Mass” says Luther, “is the rock on which is founded the popedom.” Nothing could be more truly or justly said; for even the visible, material organization of the Catholic church, was in a wondrous manner associated with its doctrines, its living principles, and its faith, as the human soul is connected with the mechanism of the body. When Christ said, *tu es Petrus*, and what follows, he did not mean to abandon his own right to be head of the church; nevertheless, in these divine words, he made that apostle its foundation, and gave to him and his successors that primacy, the exercise of which in all ages, as a fact of history, is proved by the very protestations and cautionary measures of distant churches, when its action gave them displeasure. The contention between St. Peter and St. Paul was not respecting a point of faith, but a question of fact and economy. The dissension between Paul and Barnabas was respecting a companion; for the former did not wish to have Marcus for his associate, as the latter proposed. St. Cyprian did not regard the question of baptism as one of faith; pope St. Stephen had not expressly and explicitly defined it, so that two centuries afterwards, St. Augustine said, that it had not, up to his time, been clearly defined †. How did the religious innovators account for that fact, attested by St. Augustin, that not only they were disposed to disparage the prince of the apostles, as Fuller complains, but the Pagans also had vehemently hated the apostle

* III. 18.

† Tract. VI. art. 1 ad 3.

Peter * ? St. Augustin says, that “ when the Pagans saw that the Christian religion increased in spite of persecution, they began to think of certain Greek oracular verses which pronounced Christ to be innocent, but affirmed, that Peter, by his magic, contrived to have the name of Christ worshipped for 365 years, after which there would be an end of it. “ O the madness of these men ! ” cries St. Augustin, “ to believe that Peter, his disciple, and though he had not learned magical arts from Christ, yet was a magician, and that he preferred having the name of Christ worshipped rather than his own ; for which object he was to employ his magic, and to undergo great labours, and finally death ! If it was the wicked magician, Peter, who made the world fall in love with Christ, what did innocent Christ do in order to make Peter so love him ? Nos ergo qui sumus vocamurque Christiani non in Petrum credimus, sed in quem creditit Petrus. Edified by the sermons of Peter concerning Christ, not poisoned by incantations, nor deceived by magic, but assisted by his benefits, Christ, the master of Peter, in the doctrine which leads to eternal life, is himself our master † .” This assuredly is an instance of what is remarked by the present supreme pontiff, that “ facts intrinsically connected with doctrines, prove the doctrines themselves.” “ The distinctive character of the government of the church,” to use the language of this illustrious pope, “ was a perpetual and immutable activity, independent of the activity of the violence of men † .” The Pope might be resisted by a council when it was not certain he was pope, as in the case of Gregory XII. and Benedict XIII., whom the council of Pisa took care to style Pietro di Luna ; for the church was provided with means of securing herself from being governed by an illegitimate pope, and also when by the pope’s own authority he was resisted, as in the case of John XXIII., who had promised previously to agree to whatever should be determined, even though it were to be against his own person. In no country, let it be remembered, was the papal authority overthrown, without the loud remonstrances and protestation of those whom men were commanded by God to hear, under pain of being transferred

* De civitate Dei, Lib. XX. 24. † Id. Lib. XVIII. 54.

‡ D. Capellari il trionfo della santa sede Disc. Prelim. 33.

from his right hand to the left. One writer, at least, on the side of the innovators, relates the fact as respecting England, with historical fidelity. "Upon the first expulsion of the pope's authority," says Weever, "and king Henry's undertaking of the supremacy, the priests, both religious and secular, did openly in their pulpits so far extol the pope's jurisdiction and authority, that they preferred his laws before the king's. Whereupon the king sent his mandatory letters to certain of his nobility, and others in especial office, thinking thereby to restrain their seditions, false doctrines, and exorbitancy *."

With respect to the temporal power associated with this spiritual primacy, it will be sufficient to hear the opinions of men either formally in the ranks of its adversaries, or in reality its timid and suspicious friends. Amongst the former, Leibnitz justifies the policy of the middle ages in relation to the action of Rome, to such a degree, as to desire that it might revive from its ashes; and of the latter, Stephen Pasquier is a representative, whose testimony is as follows: "Never," says he, "did any Principality begin from so low an origin, according to the world's thoughts; for it was built on an obstinate poverty, on a continued affliction, on a sworn martyrdom; and never did any Principality arrive at such an extreme degree of greatness; and that, not like other monarchies by arms, but by the renouncement of arms, by keeping aloof from the intrigues of empire, and in spite of all sorts of obstacles opposed to it from the very first, and of all dangers from mistaken or hostile zeal in later times, for never was there a dignity so much assailed by contradictory opinions, which nevertheless tended equally to undermine it. The dignity of the see of Constantinople, which vainly attempted to claim equality by means of the favour of emperors, and by arrogating lofty titles founded on its local connection with the chief seat of earthly power, enjoyed but a short respite, and great and shameful was the fall and punishment; but that of Rome stood immovable and uninterruptedly triumphant, as if, to use the Gentile imagery, the fortune of the eternal city, weary of being commanded by arms, wished to try what new grandeur it could obtain under men who made

* A discourse on funeral monuments, p. 80.

profession only of the Word of God and Scripture*.” Well might the nations subject to Christian Rome use the words which Torquato Tasso ascribes to them, and say, “O happy yoke! O fortunate subjection, by means of which we are become victorious in studies, in discipline, in empire. Truly, if there be any part of the world not subdued by the Romans, it remains in eternal darkness, not less than the Cimmerian people of whom the poets speak. Whereas, everywhere else men live under the reign of the Christian philosophy and equality of laws, forming one fold under one shepherd. Not many years after Plutarch had past, the world had taken this form by means of the authority and power of the Roman Pontiffs. Spain, England, Scotland, Ireland, the farthest islands of the ocean, France, Germany, Pannonia, Sarmatia, Illyria, both Misias, Thrace, Macedonia, Epirus, Greece, and the provinces of Asia near the Euphrates, and those of Africa, Arabia, and Egypt, constituted one single republic and one church†.” All the names in the ecclesiastical hierarchy, as Pasquier remarks, were more names of charge than of honour. “Est magis oneris quam honoris,” says Pope Symmachus of the Pallium, in his Epistle to a German Bishop‡. “Quid est Episcopatus nisi conciatus?” says Ives de Chartres, “quid aliud est hic honor nisi onus§.” St. Peter Damian beholds in the short reign of the Roman Pontiffs, which has never equalled the years of Peter, the action of a divine ordinance, to show, as he tells Pope Alexander, how the glory of temporal life is to be despised upon that supreme seat.

At Rome, the ecclesiastical council, which answered to a senate, was composed of seventy members styled cardinals, a word to express pre-eminence, not from any ambition, or from their being the parish priests of Rome, since they existed before them, but of necessity, to distinguish them as the separate council of that Church||. Landulph speaks of the twenty-four cardinals of the church of Milan, appointed by St. Ambrose¶, for every

* Recherches de la France, Lib. III. c. 4.

† Risposta di Roma a Plutarco.

‡ Germanis Sacra, I. 4. § Epist. XVII.

|| Joan. devoti Inst. Can. I. 3.

¶ Mediolanens. Hist. Lib. I. c. 4.

bishop had a similar council of chosen priests and deacons similarly styled, whom he consulted in the government of his diocese, as we see St. Cyprian giving to his council a deliberative voice; and on the bishop's death, they elected one of their body to succeed him. The dignity of the canons belonged not separately to each, but to the whole college, on which devolved the authority during the vacancy of the see. By ancient privilege, as the cardinals were not bound to reside in Rome, this great consistory and senate spread itself through all the kingdoms of Christendom, so that each cardinal was an assistant to secure the concord of Christian princes, a police, adds Pasquier, which was never known in any other republic*.

Legates were styled, sent, and born. The archbishops of Canterbury and York, of Rheims and Lyons, of Toledo, Salzburg and Pisa, were legates born. Patriarchs exercised the same power over archbishops, which the latter exercised over bishops. The dignity of metropolitan or archbishop existed before the Council of Nice, and is supposed to have come down from the apostles†. With the metropolitan dignity were invested Titus and Timothy, and their successors, who were appointed over the churches of Crete and the whole province of Asia. The archbishop had the cross borne before him through the whole province, in token of his jurisdiction. By the Council of Lateran, under Innocent the Third, metropolitans were enjoined to hold in their provinces every year a council of suffragan bishops, to reform what might be defective in the manners of the clergy; and for that end fit persons were to be deputed to take cognizance of the lives of ecclesiastics, and to make their report to this council.

All patriarchs and archbishops had the pallium, which was taken from the altar that contains the body of St. Peter, and therefore it was said to be taken from the body of St. Peter. On the day of St. Agnes, in the church of St. Agnes, in Via Nomentana, every year two white lambs are offered at mass, blessed at the Agnus Dei, and then delivered to be nourished in some convent

* Lib. III. 5.

† Joan. Devoti Instit. Can. I. 3.

of nuns until they are shorn. With their wool the pallium is made, which the Pope alone wears in all places and at all times, others only wearing it within the limits of their jurisdiction and on high festivals, when they celebrate pontifically. The pallium adhered to the person of the archbishop, and was buried with him in the same tomb *.

"The state of episcopal pre-eminence," says Gerson, "has the exercise of its power under the Pope, Peter and his successors, as under one having the plenary fountain of episcopal authority. So that as curates are subject to bishops, by whom the use of their power may be limited or taken away, in like manner doubtless has the Pope authority over prelates†." To a bishop were necessary both ordination and power of jurisdiction, which could be received only from him who had the supreme power over all the churches under Christ, namely, the Roman Pontiff ‡. Not that the bishops were to be simple vicars of the Pope, as governors of a city, acting for the civil monarch. This was not a consequence of the Papal monarchy, but only an imaginary deduction of its adversaries. The Pope could do all things in the government of the Church, so long as he used his power for edification and not for destruction; but bishops were elected for edification, that each might watch over his own flock, while one should have a more eminent power, to prevent schisms and disunion; therefore the supreme Pontiff could never injure the episcopal office, any more than a bishop could oppose the subordination of all to one §. From ancient times coadjutors were given to bishops. Alexander was given to Narcissus, bishop of Jerusalem, he being 120 years old; and Augustin was given for a similar reason to Valerius, bishop of Hippo. Bishops used to be carried in chairs when they made their first entry into their cathedral, which was a custom originating in the forms of the old consular dignity.

With the solitary exception of Aërius, who could form no sect, the distinction of the episcopacy and priesthood

* Lib. I. tit. 3. § 3.

† Gerson. de stat. Eccles. Consider. 3. de stat. præl.

‡ Joan. Devoti Instit. Can. Lib. I. tit. 2.

§ Capellari trionfo della santa sede.

was recognized, without contradiction, for more than 1400 years. The constant tradition of all the apostolic churches, attested an unbroken line of succession from the apostles; and those which had been founded in later times, could similarly show the long line of their successive pastors, as in the great hall of the Episcopal Palace of Séez, where we behold the portraits of all the seventy-seven bishops that had filled that see from St. Latuin, in the year 400*.

In the fifth century, when St. Remi baptized Clovis, the church of Rheims already counted a succession of fifteen bishops†. That secondary and accessory power, which the wants of the nations and the reverence of their rulers granted to the episcopal office, may be traced after all to what the apostle suggests,—“Audet aliquis vestrum, habens negotium ‡.” For, as Estius says, “From this doctrine of the apostle, in the time of Christian princes, it was the custom for Christians to bring their causes before their bishops, as arbiters, that they might be determined and judged by them; and at length, by the imperial constitutions, the bishops had the legal power of judging causes.”

From the beginning bishops had adopted external marks of their dignity. The apostles St. John and St. James, and the evangelist St. Mark, wore a border of gold upon their heads. The ring was given to bishops and abbots as an emblem of power, according to the words of the ritual: “Ut quæ signanda sunt signes, et quæ operienda sunt prodas.” From the life of St. Cæsarius of Arles, as also from that of St. Germain, it appears that in the sixth century, it was the custom for a clerk to bear the crosier before a bishop when he went to a church. In the fourth century we find that bishops were treated as lords. Anquetil observes that at Rheims, as in other metropolises, the temporal power of the prelate was insensibly established by the deference of the people for the wisdom and virtue of their first bishops; though there it was more rapid in its progress by the especial favour of

* D'Orville Recherches Hist. sur la Ville et le Diocèse de Séez.

† Anquetil, Hist. de Rheims, I. 54.

‡ 1 Cor. 6.

the kings of France*. There were no parish priests during the first three centuries, for the bishop then presiding with his senate in the one church to which all repaired, was sufficient for the general wants. Nay, in cities there were no parish priests before the tenth century. The bishop would only send priests to different places according as he thought fit, and for a limited space of time. Subsequently the bishops chose to appoint permanent priests to govern parishes, so that the power of these parish priests emanated from the bishop, to whom they were always to be subject†. By means of synods, the clergy were enabled to act in constant union, to their mutual correction and encouragement. Jaques de Silly, bishop of Séez, in order to give facility to his clergy to attend the synods, built a large house for them in his episcopal city, where he entertained them and their horses at his own expense during the session of these assemblies.

In the language of the first ages, the word parish, was used to signify diocese. Thus in the Apostolical Canons, and in Eusebius, *παροικιον* means bishopric, for it was not till the sixth century that the lesser divisions were established, which now bear the name of parish, and that the mother church became distinguished by the title of cathedral.

Parish churches used in ancient times to be called monastery, or moutier, from the priests who served in them living in community. Thus St. Augustin formed a community of priests to serve each church. In the sixth century, St. Rigobert assigned goods in common to all the clergy of Rheims, who were bound to live in community under one roof. As Bonald observes, the life in community agreed much better with the religious functions of the ministers of religion, for in transferring the embarrassment of domestic cares to the body at large, it left the individuals more liberty of mind and of body to fulfil their public functions, and it tended to preserve in them the spirit of their order‡. In general, a title to some church or monastery was necessary for orders, but

* Hist. de Rheims, tom. I. 10.

† Joan Devoti Instit. Can. Lib. I. tit. 3.

‡ Législation Primit. II. 266.

not always. Merely on account of learning and piety some were ordained without any specific destination, as in the instance of St. Jerome being ordained by Paulinus, bishop of Antioch.

This gradual and gentle descent from the highest to the lowest degree in the ecclesiastical hierarchy, was designed for the more effectual diffusion through the social order of the sacred deposit of faith, and for facilitating a strict and impartial administration of justice, all members being responsible to a higher tribunal, to which there was an instant appeal when circumstances rendered it desirable.

At Rheims, when the provost of the cathedral did homage to the archbishop, putting the left hand on his breast, he used to hold the right and keep it free, in sign of the engagement which he undertook, to defend the chapter against the enterprizes of the prelate*. But to Rome all final appeals were made.

Pope St. Innocent the First received a deputation from St. Chrysostom, and, after his death, refused to communicate with the Oriental bishops, until they had reversed the sentence against his memory. This was long anterior to the date of the false decretals which schismatic doctors said were the origin of appeals to Rome. "As you know that it is a synodial law," says St. Avitus, writing to Senarius, "that in things relating to the state of the church, if there should be any source of debate, we, as it were, the obedient members, should have recourse to the great priest of the Roman Church as to our head, therefore I have applied to Hormisda in this affair†." In fact, the influence of that primal seat was in constant action, an intercourse being maintained between it and the most distant churches. In ancient times the bishops of Sicily used to go once in three years to Rome, but St. Gregory the Great extended the interval to five years ‡. In years of Jubilee, Ferdinand de Bazan, archbishop of Palermo, used to send to Rome twelve priests and twelve laymen pilgrims §. Rome was

* Hist. de Rheims, Lib. I.

† S. Aviti, Epist. XXXVI.

‡ Sicilia Sacra, I. 34.

§ Id. I. 264.

the standard which all aspired to imitate. St Odo of Cluni says, that he used to hear it said at Rome, in praise of the conversation of the clergy at Tours, that they who deserved to live near the Basilica of the blessed Martin, had no occasion to travel to Rome *.

Such, then, were the divisions and order of the sacred ministry: let us briefly examine into the measures adopted for its support, since what we considered in relation to the detachment and humility of the clergy in the first book, falls under observation here, in regard to the fulfilment of justice.

That tithes are by divine right, if we understand by them the support due to the clergy, but that they are not by divine right, if they be understood as the grant of the tenth part of fruits, was the doctrine of St. Thomas†. Nevertheless, as Alfonso the Wise said, tithes were not paid for the sake of the clergy, but for the sake of God, who will reward the offerers in this world or in the next. Never, during the ages of faith, was the support of the clergy associated in the minds of men with the idea of any thing but the strictest justice. The mercy of the Church even interposed between the people and the state which desired to serve her. "Let there be no forced offerings to the Catholic clergy and to the church," says St. Avitus, archbishop of Vienne. "Nunquam oblata pronuntiem quæ antequam offerentur oblata sunt ‡." The custom of paying tithes was not received generally in Spain until the sixteenth century, before which time there was no general law to enforce its payment. In France the curates of many parishes had no tithes, but only their nourishment in adjacent abbeys, as simple monks §.

The history of tithes in Catholic ages, recalls nothing but virtue, generosity, and acts of the purest benevolence; sometimes even it is associated with deeds of heroic devotion, the trophies of which reflect honour upon an entire nation, as in the instance of the letters of King Ranimirus, respecting the vow of the tenths, in conse-

* De Combust. Basil. Bibliothec. Cluniacens. 149.

† II. 2. Qu. 87. Art. I.

‡ S. Aviti Epist. Victorio Episcopo.

§ Lebeuf, Hist. du Diocèse de Paris, tom. V. 163.

quence of the victory which abolished the infamous tribute of the Christian virgins, which are every year read publicly in the vulgar tongue in the church of Compostella*.

The personal condition of the clergy in the middle ages, was not what is often supposed. King Ferdinand coming one day into the cathedral of Leon, heard the divine office, but saw the ministers of the church through poverty serving at the altar in bare feet, and immediately he left funds to supply them in future and ever after with shoes†. Churches were often supported by lands which had been given to them in distant provinces. Thus that of Paris, as early as in the sixth century, possessed estates not merely round the city, but also in the diocese of Sens. It had lands also in Provence to furnish oil for the lamps‡. Theodoc, duke of Bavaria, in the seventh century, founded with his own funds the bishopric of Saltzbourg; and Robert Guiscard, and the other Norman princes, similarly made provision for episcopal sees in Sicily and Calabria. Orderic Vitalis relates that Giroie de Courserault, in the eleventh century, having obtained the lands of Helgon, demanded of the inhabitants to what bishop they belonged, and they assured him that they appertained to no bishop. Then he replied, "That is a great injustice: far from me the idea of living without a pastor, and exempt from the yoke of ecclesiastical discipline." Then, having inquired who was the most religious of the neighbouring bishops, he subjected all his lands to the jurisdiction of Roger, bishop of Lisieux, and persuaded Baudri de Banquencœi, Vauquelin du Pont-Echenfrei, and Roger de Merlerault, to subject similarly their estates, which had been equally independent§. The clergy themselves, who often abandoned great possessions of their own, gave riches to the church. Priests sometimes combined together for the purpose of maintaining the offices. Thus at Blois, the collegiate church of the Holy Saviour was founded within the first court of the castle by twelve secular priests, in the year 1000,

* Joan. Vasæi Brugensis *Rer. Hispanic. Chronic.* VII.

† Roderici Toletani de reb. Hispaniæ, Lib. VI. 14.

‡ Lebeuf, *Hist. du Diocèse de Paris*, I.

§ Hist. Normand. Lib. III.

who put all their goods in common, and made a fund, after building the church, sufficient to support twenty-eight canons*. The Venerando Consorzio at Parma is a congregation of ninety-four priests, who serve the cathedral voluntarily, without deriving any thing from it. So far were they from being men whose only care it is to have their coffers filled.

The use of annats was most ancient in the Roman Church, and their origin and object were most just, for they were expended in the propagation and defence of the Christian religion; and, at the Council of Trent, no charge could be substantiated against them. Wadding has fully justified Rome against Mathieu Paris, who accuses the collections for the Holy See in England, and has clearly demonstrated the justice of that tribute†. It was in general thought that if the clergy had been dependant on casual bounty, and the liberality of the great, their influence could never have been preserved. John the Baptist would not have told Herod so boldly, “non licet,” if he had been his pensioner. Daniel would never have ventured to decipher the fatal writing to Balthasar, if he had accepted the honours and riches which this prince had offered him. Restrained by no consideration, he spoke to him with boldness: “Be thy presents for thyself, O king, and bestow the gifts of thy house on another; but I am to read this writing to you, and to explain to you what it contains.”

The origin of ecclesiastical exemptions and privileges must be traced to the love and veneration with which the clergy were regarded both by kings and people during the ages of faith. The praise bestowed upon the Marquis Boniface by Donizo, might have been extended, as we observed in the last book, to innumerable men in those days invested with power, who all, like the father of Mathilda, had their chaplains, who reverently sung before them the nocturnal and daily hours, and on whom they were ever contriving to confer some new favour.

“ Pontifices sacros habuit quam maxime caros,
Ipsis donabat, quæ censuit his fore grata ‡.”

* Bernier Hist. du Blois, 32.

† Annal. Minorum, tom. III. 185.

‡ Vita Mathild. Lib. I. c. 14.

These privileges and honours are no doubt far from being in harmony with the views of men at the present day; but then it should be remarked, that the language of the moderns respecting the ministers of religion, indicates a total departure from all former traditions of mankind. The epithets “party of the priests,” “people that are under the dominion of the priests,” and other similar expressions, signify in fact nothing else but the descendants of the race of Seth, the generation of those who fear God. Isocrates commences his celebrated panegyric, by saying that he has often wondered why persons who excel in bodily exercises should be esteemed deserving of great gifts, while those who prepare the souls of men for assisting others, are neglected and left without honour; since the former cannot impart their strength to others, whereas all men can derive advantage from the mind of those who think wisely. Nevertheless, we have only to consult any of the fragments of the early philosophic writings, to be convinced, that during the primitive ages of the world men believed an extraordinary degree of respect to be due to those who sought to make others wise and just. It was the advice of Thales to Pythagoras, that he should apply to the priests of Egypt, for that he would become wiser and diviner than all other men if he passed his life with those priests *.

From the first age of Christianity, it was the custom to kneel down and kiss the feet of a bishop or priest, to receive his benediction; and it was deemed the greatest happiness to give lodging to a priest or deacon. “Respect forbids me to sit down before a priest,” says St. Jerome, in his epistle to Heliodorus. From this custom of kneeling to the bishop, the pagans, indeed, imagined that the Christians adored the nature of a priest as that of a parent †. The primitive discipline, in this respect, was transmitted through the middle ages. Iona, in his laical institutes, shows the duty of honouring all priests, on account of their order, not on account of any accidental attendant on their persons; and he says that the contrary fault can only arise from the negligence of priests, and from pride and ignorance in the laity ‡. Charles of Blois

* Jamblich de Pythagoric. Vit. 2.

† Minut. Felix, p. 333.

‡ De Institut. Laic. Lib. II. cap. 20.

would always descend from his horse to salute an ecclesiastic. “*Devout men*,” says Durandus, “kiss the anointed hands of a priest *.” By the canons of the council of Epaone, in the year 517, deacons had been forbidden to sit down in the presence of priests, and the same council desired that noblemen should come at Christmas and at Easter, to receive the benediction of the bishop. The council of Mâcon, in 585, prescribed the marks of honour which seculars ought to show to a clerk on meeting him, and the manner in which the clerk should reply to them. The devotion of the people made such regulations necessary.

Landulph, the old historian of Milan, speaking of the love evinced by the people for the clergy, says, that “there was no laic in the city, who did not, according to his ability, entertain every year, for the love of God, two, four, or twelve, or even more priests, attending to the precept, qui vos recepit me recepit, and that they might have a prophet’s reward, receiving them with the utmost humility and charity †.” “In England,” as Weever observes, “the priests were in such high and holy repute amongst the lay people, that when any of them were espied abroad, they would flock presently about him, and with all reverence humbly beseech his benisons, either by signing them with the cross, or in holy prayers for them.” “And further,” saith Bede, “it was the manner, in these primitive times, of the people of England, that when any of the clergy, or any priest came to a village, they would all, by and by, at his calling, come together, to hear the word, and willingly hearken to such things as were said, and more willingly follow in works such things as they could hear and understand; a wonderful order of piety both in priest and people.” The Saxon chronicle applies generally some eulogistic epithet to bishops. It is either, the benevolent bishop Athelwold, the father of monks, or the wise man; or the innocent abbot Egbert; or Cyneward the good, prelate of manners mild, or bishop Elfgar, the abundant giver of alms, or the blessed bishop Ernulf of Rochester. Similarly, in the old chronicles of Germany,

* *Rationale.*

† *Midiolanens. Hist. Lib. II. c. 36.*

the epithet *dulcissimus presbyter*, is applied to the first Catholic missionaries in the eighth century. The account given of the extraordinary veneration of the Spaniards for the clergy by so late a traveller as Bourgoign *, would lead us to suppose that the manners of that people, in relation to the church, were, down to latter times, similar to those of our ancestors as described by Bede, which in fact were predominant in all parts of Christendom, during the middle ages. When St. Bernard was at Milan, and in other places of Lombardy, by reason of the multitude who came to see him, and to take his benediction, it was necessary for him to shut himself up, and to appear only at a window, and thence to give them his blessing. The empress waited on St. Martin at table, and wherever he trod, or placed his hand, people used to kiss the spot. And what style of manners, think you, had this Martin, who had princes and people at his command? On one occasion, approaching the city of Arverna, when the senators were apprised of his coming, for this city then contained the flower of the Roman nobility, they all went out to meet him, with horses and chariots; but he, riding upon an ass, on which a coarse cloth had been thrown, and coming to the summit of the hill Belenater, which commanded a view of the village Rigomago, saw them advancing with all this pomp, and asked for what purpose they were thus coming, and being told that these were the senators of Arverna, who were coming to meet him, "It is not for me" he replied, "to enter their city with all this pomp," and turning his ass, he was about to ride in another direction, but they followed him, and implored him to enter their city, saying, "We have heard the fame of your sanctity, and we have many sick whom you should visit;" so he went with them. On this spot where the saint had stood, a chapel was afterwards built, which St. Gregory of Tours mentions †. Not even political animosities could prevail over the universal sentiment which prescribed veneration to the episcopal character. The citizens of Rheims suspecting that the archbishop, John de Craon, was inclined to favour the English, had obliged him to leave his castle, and reside in his palace within the city.

* Tableau l'Espagne, vol. II. 325.

† Greg. Turen. Miracul. Lib. I. 5.

The prelate shortly after commanded a procession to draw the mercy of God upon France : in the midst of the ceremony, one of the principal inhabitants, Robert Evrard, came forward to him, in name of the whole city, saying, that they were grieved for having caused him displeasure, that it was not their intention to give him pain, and that they begged his forgiveness. The chief men of the city pressed round Evrard, to confirm what he had said with their respectful looks, while the rest of the people were on their knees. Then the archbishop, with great joy, declared that he pardoned them from his heart *. All this flowed from the general idea of the sacerdotal character predominant during the ages of faith, as expressed in the book of the imitation of Christ, “ Great is the mystery, and great the dignity of priests, to whom is given what is not granted to the angels—the power of celebrating and consecrating the body of Christ. The priest clothed with the sacred vestments, was the representative of Christ, who humbly supplicated God for the people ; he had before and behind him the signs of our Lord’s cross, for a perpetual remembrancer of the passion of Christ ; before him he bore the cross, to show that he was to be diligent in following his footsteps, and behind him he bore it to indicate that he was to bear the injuries committed against himself by others for God’s sake.” The ecclesiastical exemptions may be traced from the earliest times. Artaxerxes commanded that no tax should be imposed upon the least ministers of the temple. Nevertheless, the personal immunities of the clergy were mere gifts from kings. The Gospel does not grant them any privilege. Jesus Christ himself paid the tribute due to Cæsar ; and this was a personal obligation, for he had no property. Constantine exempted the clergy from personal tributes, in order that they might apply themselves exclusively to their functions ; but in granting them immunities, he made an exception in the case of their private patrimony, and it is curious to remark, that the edict in which this distinction occurs, was issued at the request of the Spanish, African, and Italian bishops. These holy prelates deemed it just that the clergy should support the state with their own property, since they were protected in the enjoyment

* Hist. de Rheims, Liv. III. 192.

of it by the laws. Although St. Jerome and St. Augustin thought that the clergy should not retain their own patrimony, because they wished them to be as poor as the apostles, the canon laws both of the eastern and western churches allowed them to keep it. The exemptions granted by Constantine, were revoked by Julian, and restored by Valentinian. These were afterwards multiplied by Charlemagne, who gave great immunities to the clergy, as to their persons and property *. In 1118, at the desire of Thibault, abbot of St. Maur-des-fosses, near Paris, king Louis le Gros published an ordinance which began thus, “ Since according to the tenure of the holy laws, the royal power, in virtue of the duty imposed upon it, ought to attend above all things to the defence and honour of the churches, it is fit that those to whom so great power has been delegated by the hand of God, should provide with the most attentive solicitude for the peace and tranquillity of the churches, and that to the praise of Almighty God, by whom kings reign, they should honour the possessions of the church with some privilege, that they may thus acquit themselves of their kingly duty, and so receive indubitably the eternal remuneration ; let all men know, therefore, that Thibault, abbot of the monastery of St. Peter, has come into our presence to complain that the serfs of the holy church of his monastery are so despised by secular persons, that in the plauds and civil courts they will not receive their evidence against free men, and that the ecclesiastical serfs are not in any thing preferred to the lay serfs. Having heard the complaint of the church, being moved both by reason and affection, I have found it necessary to deliver this church, so dear to our person, from this scandal.” In fact, under the privileges attached to the domains of the church, the rustics, towards the middle of the thirteenth century, acquired such riches and power, many of them possessing fiefs, that they gave alarm to some lay seignories, and even kings. It was Charlemagne who first exempted the clergy from being citable before the *secular* judges †, though modern English lawyers pretend

* Thomassinus de Vet. et Nova Discip. pars III. Lib. I.
c. 36.

† Cap. Carl. m. a. 801. §. 39. f. 1. col. 355.

that it was the clergy who, about the middle of the twelfth century, renounced all immediate subordination to the civil magistrate, openly pretending to an exemption †. Sir Matthew Hale even says, that Henry II. in the constitutions of Clarendon, “checked the pride and insolence of the pope and the clergy, restraining the exemptions they claimed from secular jurisdiction ‡.”

The age for such misrepresentations to pass current, is nearly at an end. “One is obliged to confess,” says Michelet, “that the ecclesiastical jurisdiction in the twelfth century was an anchor of safety. It might spare some guilty persons, but how many innocent did it not save §.”

Before the Church had fully changed the ancient customs of the Gentile world, the ecclesiastical privileges of asylum were of the utmost benefit. The Church, and a certain space round it, the bishop’s palace, the presbytery house, the canonical buildings, the bell tower, the hospital for travellers, and for the sick, the cemetery, every monastery, and every priest, bearing the eucharist, furnished an asylum from which not even slaves could be torn ||. The clerical exemptions were all in the interest of the poor. Thus the vassals of the bishopric of Evreux, had the privilege of being exempt from certain tolls which were paid throughout all France ¶; and those of the Church of St. Cuthbert had exemptions from military service.

The justice which presided over the promotion of men, to the different degrees in the sacred hierarchy, was a remarkable feature in the character of the middle ages; distinguishing, indeed, at all times, the Catholic discipline, from that which has been opposed to the Church; for it was not merely in the age of Tertullian, that one beheld Heretics receiving all persons, and conferring hasty honours upon them, in order to bind by glory those whom they could not hold by truth; and could see verified what he affirms, that no where are men promoted

* Notes to Sir M. Hale’s Hist. of the Com. Law, p. 164.

† P. 174.

‡ Hist. de France II. 393.

§ Joan. Devoti Instit. Can. Lib. II. tit. 8.

|| Hist. d’ Evreux II.

more easily than in the camps of the rebels ; “ ubi ipsum esse illic, promereri est *.”

Observe the injunctions of Ives de Chartres, writing to Hugo, Archbishop of Lyons, respecting a young man not fit for the ecclesiastical state. “ Ne in manibus ejus committatur salus aliena qui nunquam adhuc deliberavit de salute sua ;” in proof of which accusation, he sends him “ One out of many songs, metrically and musically composed by him, which he, and other youths like himself, sing in the streets and squares of cities †.”

Mauger, son of Richard II. uncle of William the Conqueror, archbishop of Rouen, could never obtain the pallium from Rome, being always refused it as unworthy.

“ It is not,” says William of Poictiers, “ that Mauger did not know how to read with a scientific eye the Holy Scriptures ; but he did not know how to govern his life, and that of his dependents, after the rules which they impose ‡.”

The conscience of men ill qualified, often interposed to obviate the possibility of their promotion. In the year 1226, the canons of Rheims had given their votes for the election of Hugues de Pierre-Pont, to the archiepiscopal throne. He was suspected of having long desired to obtain the dignity ; yet when the moment came, he began to have fear ; and he addressed himself to a holy abbot, asking his advice. After having had the modesty to consult the pious recluse, he had the courage to submit to his decision ; and Hugues, in consequence, refused the throne, which was offered him §. We find John de Avila writing to a young man, who had doubts whether he ought to receive the priesthood ; and saying, “ I commend your humility, and I love you the more for it.” In times past, the most holy men often remained in the rank of deacons, or of the inferior degrees. In those times men had low degrees, and led very high lives ||.

On the other hand, no obscurity of birth, or other circumstance of condition, was an obstacle to the elevation of men of merit, to the highest dignity of the Church.

* De Præscript. 4I.

† Ivonis Carnot. Epist. LXVI.

‡ Will. of Poictiers’ Life of Will. the Conqueror.

§ Hist. de Rheims, Lib. III. 9. || Epist. LXI.

By the canons of the council of Orleans in 549, as in many previous, it was decreed, that a serf once ordained, became for ever exempt from all service derogatory to the sacred ministry ; but the bishop who ordained the serf of a secular without his consent, was obliged to give two serfs in his place to the former lord. Chateaubriand remarks, “ that two thirds of the riches of the Church were in the hands of the plebeian part of the clergy.” Wondrous are the examples of men promoted to the highest places, solely through regard to the interests of the heavenly life. St. Celestin V. was drawn from a hermitage to be raised to the supreme chair. Pope Alexander V. was so poor in his youth, that he begged his bread from door to door. It was a Franciscan friar who first discovered his dispositions, and taught him Latin. On the death of a bishop, a fast of three days was observed, previous to the election of a successor, which was sometimes determined by a vision, or the counsel of a child *. In the year 1248, as the canons of Rouen were preparing to elect an archbishop on the Easter festivals, it was resolved that they should elect the person who should first come into the Church to pray to God. At break of day, brother Odo Rigaut, a Franciscan friar of holy life, was going out to preach in the fields, and passing by the parvis of our lady, entered into the Church, thinking only to say a short prayer in passing. The canons immediately came up, and embraced him, and confirmed his election †.

Denenulfus, Bishop of Winchester, had been to a late age, not only void of learning, but even a swine herd ; when king Alfred, yielding to the violence of the Danes, fled into the woods, and met him by accident tending the swine. Discovering his merit and ability, he directed him to be instructed in letters ; and such was his progress, that he finally was raised to the episcopal degree ‡.

Oderic Vitalis says, that during the fifty-six years that William governed Normandy and England, the manner of providing for the Churches was this : when a pastor died, the prince sent delegates to the widowed see, to

* Mabil. *Præfat.* in 1. *Sæcul.* Benedict. §. 9.

† Taille pied, *Recueil des Antiquités de Rouen*, 192.

‡ Will. *Malmesb. de Gest. Pont. Anglor.* Lib. II.

take an inventory of all the goods of the Church, lest they might suffer injury. Then the prelates, abbots, and other sage counsellors, being convoked, he took counsel of them to know who was the most proper person to set over the house of God, for things divine and secular. Then whoever had the pre-eminence in virtue and wisdom, was established chief of the see or abbey; and never was there any consideration of fortune, or power, but only of holiness and wisdom *. He shows at great length the cause why the Normans found the English sunk so low, in regard to learning; whereas the Roman pontiffs had formerly subjected them to better institutions. The Anglo-Saxon clergy had before been profoundly imbued with both Greek and Latin erudition; but the long enduring ravages of the Danes in England, had overthrown the seats of learning, and dispersed the stones of the sanctuary. The monasteries being destroyed, the monastic discipline became relaxed; and the canonical discipline did not revive again, until the invasion of the Normans †. In these latter times, when the manners and discipline of the ages of faith, had given way before the influence of the modern governments, it was an archbishop who exclaimed, “ May the sanctuary be laid desolate, provided that hearts, those true sanctuaries, may be pure! Rather let us see every thing, than see again every thing that we see ‡.”

From all this it followed, that the bishops of the middle ages were not merely deserving curates to conduct a diocese like a parish, with views corresponding to a small locality; but besides, being men who had been trained in the needful rudiments, they were often great and magnanimous philosophers, to direct the spirit and manners of a whole nation. From the very circumstances of the mode of their election, they could not be the successive disciples of a particular school, to hand down from age to age, the jealous prejudices, and narrow conceptions of a party. The deposit of faith was all that they transmitted to successors; they were often learned monks, who had come from a distant land; devout, innocent, pilgrims, possessing the wisdom of the serpent; men who could

* Hist. Normand. Lib. IV.

† Lib. IV.

‡ Fenelon pour la Fête d'un Martyr.

sympathize with all that was beautiful, and wise, and holy ; greatly, and in a philosophical as well as in a theological sense, Catholic, and who often united in themselves every kind of intellectual interest, and grandeur. St. Sophias, or Cadocus of South Wales, the twenty-fourth bishop of Beneventum, had been a monk, and an abbot. Thrice had he made a pilgrimage to Jerusalem, and seven times to Rome. At length, on account of his sanctity, this stranger was made bishop of Beneventum, where he obtained the crown of martyrdom, from the hands of the Arians, while celebrating mass in his cathedral. This was during the reign of Arthur, in Great Britain, whose deeds are recorded in a manuscript, still preserved in the archives of the monastery of St. Sophia *.

National prejudices were never suffered to oppose the promotion of men of merit in the Church, which was a common country for the people of every land. Thus in the eighth century, we find Prudance, a holy and learned Spaniard, Bishop of Troyes, in the fourth century, St. Zeno, an African, Bishop of Verona, in later times, St. Anselm, an Italian, born at Aosta, Archbishop of Canterbury, and many Irish men, bishops in Italy. In the twelfth century, John of Salisbury, an Englishman, is Bishop of Chartres; the first Bishop of Arras, was a Greek; and in a much later age Theodore, another Greek, was Archbishop of Canterbury. Mark the inscription on the tomb of Richard, Archbishop of Messana, in the cathedral of St. Nicholas, in that city, who died in 1196 :

“ Anglia me genuit, instruxit Gallia, fovit
Trinacris ; huic tandem corpus et ossa dedi †.”

Roderic Ximenes, Archbishop of Toledo in 1208, an historian and philosopher, returning from Rome into Spain, having repaired to Pope Gregory IX. on occasion of a certain controversy, as he descended the Rhone died on board the vessel, and was buried in the monastery of Horta, in Arragon, on whose tomb might be read this ancient inscription :

* Italia Sacra, tom. VII. 16.

† Sicilia Sacra, tom. II. 400.

“ *Mater Navarra, nutrix Castella,
Schola Parisius, sedes Toletum,
Hortus Mausoleum, requies cœlum.*”

Gervais, Bishop of Seez, in Normandy, was of a noble family, in Lincolnshire ; he had composed for himself an inscription, which is on his tomb :

“ *Anglia me genuit, nutrit Gallia ; sanctus
Justus, Thenolium, Præmonstratumque dedere
Abbatis nomen, sed mitram Sagia ; tumbam
Hic locus, oretur ut detur spiritus astris *.*”

The sixty-sixth bishop of that see, was James Suarez, a Portuguese ; Arthur Dillon, from Ireland, was a canon of Rouen in the sixteenth century. Robert, an Englishman, a holy and learned prelate, was the fifteenth Bishop of Olmutz, in Moravia.

How anxiously the Church watched, to cut off all the advances of simony in every age, may be seen in the great work of Thomassinus †. From the year 1049, to 1071, there were five councils especially directed against simony, and investiture, which were synonymous. Speaking of this crime St. Peter Damian says, “ that there are three kinds of gifts ; munus a manu, which was money ; munus ab obsequis, which was the obedience of subjection ; and munus a lingua, which was the gift of adulation.”

Upon the coming in of William the Conqueror, Heribert became Bishop of Thetford, by simoniacal agreement. This sin of his earlier life, was afterwards expiated by a life of penitence. Making a pilgrimage to Rome, he deposed his pastoral staff and ring, but deserved to have them again presented to him. On his return he transferred his see to Norwich, where he established a great monastery ; he also founded another at Thetford. Thus he effaced the simoniacal crimes of his youth. His tears bore testimony to the sincerity of his words, saying, “ *Male quidem intravi, confiteor, sed Dei gratia operante bene egrediar. Erravimus juvenes, emendemus senes ‡.*”

* Recherches Hist. sur le Diocèse de Seez.

† De Vet. et Nov. Eccles. Discip. Pars III. Lib. I. cap. 49—
71.

‡ Will. Malmesbur. de Gestis Pontif. Angloru n, Lib. II.

Memorable, indeed, are the examples of the middle ages, respecting the horror with which the crime of simony was regarded. Who is this mysterious penitent in the desert of Fonte Avellano, that comes forth on Christmas Eve, to assist at the solemnity, after having been secluded in his cell during forty days? One trembles on beholding him. This is he who in six days accomplishes the canonic penance of an hundred years. Hark! to the clash of iron as he prostrates himself on the ground, for he wears a steel cuirass next his skin ; two iron rings encompass his body, and two press heavy on his arms and legs ; and yet with arms extended, long and fervently he prays, and makes a thousand genuflexions, while reciting one Psalter. This is the celebrated Dominicus, surnamed Loricatus, who in the year 1059, put on this terrible vest. What drove him in the desert, was the thought that he had incurred the crime of simony, in the year 1025, though it is very doubtful whether he really did partake in it or not. Such, however, is his impression ; and, therefore, he deems himself unworthy of ever again celebrating mass ; and as the gift of a vestment to a bishop was the cause of his crime, he punishes it in himself by wearing this sharp iron vestment, which he will never lay aside till his death *.

Whenever any abuse crept in, the complaints of the holy men of the middle ages are most affecting. Hear Richard of St. Victor commenting upon the words, "Beneath it dwell the animals and beasts, and in its branches converse the birds of heaven" "Thus," saith he, "the bestial spirits are kept down, but the spiritual are exalted. Let our prelates learn what they ought to do. Let them learn to depress undisciplined manners, and to raise and honour the good. What kind of monster is this, that trees should carry bears, or lions, or other bestial minds of this kind in their branches? While the birds of heaven, and the winged tribe, contrary to the law of their condition, and to the institute of their Creator, are pressed down to the ground? How often have I seen, and have groaned at seeing, the impious exalted and elevated above the cedars of Libanus. Ah! if you truly love these bestial hearts, why so exalt them? Why not spare them? Why prepare their destruction by rais-

* Annalium Camaldulensium, Lib. XIV.

ing them to the branches whence they must so terribly fall *?" When such sentiments prevailed among the inferior orders of the clergy, and among the people, there was less danger of the higher becoming forgetful of what their duty required. And accordingly Pope Urban II. in writing to the clergy and people of Chartres, with respect to the election which terminated in favour of Ives, who was raised to that see, expressly confides in this principle, desiring them to look to themselves, and adding, "Si enim placere Deo studueritis pastorem procul dubio Deo placentem habebitis †."

Now that it devolves upon me to speak of the justice of the men themselves who composed this vast body, the organization of which we have been considering, I can fully appreciate the difficulty of my enterprize. Would that I could frame some feeling lines that might discover such integrity; but I fear, as Cicero says, "ne talium personarum, cum amplificare velim, minuam etiam gloriam *," if it be lawful to use the Roman style in speaking of these modest and humble men, so free from all ambition, from that even of a legitimate glory. What do we find at the summit of this majestic hierarchy? The faith of Peter, the constancy of Cornelius, the felicity of Sylvester, the refinement of Damasus, the eloquence of Leo, the learning of Gelasius, the piety of Gregory, the magnanimity of Symmachus, the conciliatory talents of Adrian, the pacific temper of Eugene, the munificence, in regard to learning, of Nicholas, the sanctity of Pius V., the erudition of Benedict, the liberality of Pius VI., the goodness of Pius VII., the heroic justice of Leo XII., the divine light of Gregory, which hath so lately guided back to the Gospel those who were wandering after delusive fires, enticed from the way of the beatitudes by men like these described in the holy song, "Qui dixerunt: lingua nostra magnificabimus, labia nostra a nobis sunt: quis noster Dominus est †?" "Never," says Stephen Pasquier, "did a history contain more religion and sanctity than that of the bishops of Rome, in the gradual acquisition of their temporal power †." One may believe

* Richardi S. Victoris de eruditione hominis interioris Lib. II. 17.

† Ivonis Carnot. Epist. I.

† Lucullus.

§ Ps. II.

|| Recherches de la France, Lib. III. 4.

it truly, since the first thirty-six popes were saints, many of whom planted the church with their blood, and drank their Lord's chalice, all of whom were made the friends of God, their sound having gone forth into all lands, and their words to the ends of the earth; still it is well to hear it acknowledged by a writer distinguished for his political hostility to Rome. It is curious to hear Pontanus express his inability to explain by what arts the Roman pontiffs acquired that temporal power; "For it was not by arms" saith he, "that they vindicated it. They were men wholly devoted to peace and religion, arranging processions and ceremonies; men most innocent, and most removed from all ambition and excess. It is not easy to explain this history. We only behold their equal government, their tranquil administration, their study of peace, and that almost divine majesty of repose with which they are encompassed *." Even amidst the evils which desolated Italy during the tenth century, Rome beheld the eighth Stephen, the seventh Leo, and the second Agopitus, pontiffs of admirable holiness, and of blessed memory †. When Clement VIII. heard himself proclaimed pope, he prostrated himself on the earth, and prayed God to take away his life, if his election would not conduce to the advantage of the church. He was so humble, that more than once he seated himself in the tribunal of penance, and received like a simple curate every one who chose to present himself. The chronicle of St. Bertin describes pope Adeodatus as a man of marvellous benignity, who used to dismiss every one that had come to him consoled ‡. John Picus of Mirandula begins his apology by saying, that he came lately to Rome, to kiss the feet of the chief pontiff, Innocent VIII., and though it was this pope who condemned some of his propositions, he adds, "to whom, on account of the innocence of his life, the name is most justly due §." Never was there wanting, at the moment of need, the force and discernment essential to him who was to rule as Christ's vicar, in order to steer the good vessel of the church through all

* Joan. Jovian. Pontani Hist. Neapolit. Lib. I.

† Mabill. Præfat. in V. Sæcul. Benedict.

‡ Chronic. Monast. S. Bertini, cap. I. pars. VI. apud Martene Thesaur. Anecdote. tom. III.

§ Joan. Picus Mirandula Apologia.

the gusts and tides of the world's mutability. And what think you, might be found to illustrate justice in the annals of the pontifical council? "If you will review the state of the church for the last four hundred years," says Benedict Aretino, writing under Cosmo de Medicis, "I think you will acknowledge that there were not a few cardinals in holiness and learning most eminent; for without mentioning a Bonaventura, you must confess, that Bernard Uberto the Florentine, John Dominicus, Nicholas of Bologna, Francis Zabarello, Julian Cæsarino, Angelo Acciajuolo, Adimar the German, Blanda of Placentia, and Antonio Cajetan, were men who discharged that office with the highest praise and veneration, not one of whom, amidst all the state necessarily attending such a rank, was ever accused of vanity or insolence, for what in fact was more remote from them all *!" Marcilius Ficinus accordingly reminds cardinal Raphael Riario, that unless he would disgrace his office in the Roman church, his house must be a temple of God, a seat of prudence, justice, and fortitude, a fountain of charity and grace, a choir of the muses, an academy of orators and poets, a school of philosophers and theologians; it must furnish a table to the poor, a refuge to the innocent, an inheritance to the unhappy †.

Truly, for one, I can speak from personal experience, for I was at Rome when the sixteenth Gregory sat in Peter's chair, and if the testimony of an eye witness may be opposed to the scornful words of him who lately styles himself a believer, let the reader be assured, that his soul would have gathered lively virtue from beholding an assembly of the sacred college, which seemed to me the most august, majestic spectacle, that could be furnished by humanity, in harmony with its Creator's will. Youth which was solitary, or conversant with the poor, amidst its favourite haunts had escaped from hearing the calumnies of men, and therefore there were no lurking, vile delusions to obscure the vision. I marked in that audience the impress of every noble spirit; I could distinguish the wisdom of a Justiniani, the gentleness and goodness of a Rohan, the dignity and platonic majesty of a Micara, the unsated thirst of an Odeschalchi, the

* *De præstantia virorum sui ævi Dialog.*

† *Epist. Lib. V.*

frankness and manly sincerity of a Zurla, and the unaffected humility of him who once ruled the towers of Lullworth. There was in one whose name is dear to Genoa, the air of a Gregory of Tours, in another the penetration of a Jerome, in another the simplicity of a Fenelon. The spectacle did attract my soul's regard, and enable me to discover new beauties in history, and to feel the grandeur and tenderness of many scenes, the description of which may seem a rhetorical exaggeration, if one has not, from experience, an internal sense responsive to the writer's words. For now I can understand how the presence of pope Gregory IX. could cause brother Gilles, the devout contemplatist, to fall into one of his usual extacies ; now I can understand the majesty of that scene presented in the synod which was held at Rome in the year 1083, when the holy fathers spoke for three days on the weal and woe of the church, which was so troubled at the time that many bishops were prevented from attending. On the third day, when the holy pope, who was the seventh Gregory, entered, his appearance and discourse were so divine, that almost the whole of that venerable assembly was moved to tears. Of the strength of mind and constancy necessary to meet the present pressure, speaking with a tongue not human but angelic, "the whole audience" says the historian, "broke forth in groans and weeping *." We have a description by Orderic Vitalis of the spectacle furnished at the council of Rheims, and now I can appreciate the justice of his impressions respecting it. After relating that at the end of the cathedral facing the great gate, was placed the apostolic chair, on which sat Calixtus ; that before him were the cardinals ; that opposite the Rood were placed the chairs of the bishops, and that each metropolitan took his place according to the antiquity of his see,—that you beheld there Raoul of Rheims, Leotheric of Bourges, Humbert of Lyons, Goisfred of Rouen, Turstin of York, Daimbert of Sens, Hildebert of Mans, Baudri of Dole, and eight other archbishops with their suffragans, and the deputies of the absent, as also a great number of abbots, monks, and clerks,—the historian adds that this august assembly gave, by anticipation, an idea of the last judgment, which Isaiah beheld in spirit, and cried, "the

* Coleti Coll. Conc. t. XI. 676.

Lord will come to judge with the old men, and the princes of the people *.”

Bending our view lower, we are presented with the same images of living justice. Read the work of William of Malmesbury, on the lives of the bishops of England in Catholic times, or the similar work of the venerable Bede, and then judge whether that highest justice which consists in following the apostolic steps, after the injunctions of our Lord, was found wanting during the middle ages. The description of the life and manners of a Mapheus Gherardus, patriarch of Venice, by Petrus Delphinus, of Camaldoli †, will show, that in times long subsequent, amidst circumstances so unfavourable as those which characterized the end of the fifteenth century, the same type continued to be realized; so that wherever religion remained unchanged, there was still found the same order of men discharging the episcopal office; not such as would speak, in the assemblies of peers, of their attainment of a mitre, as evidence of their own success in life: their views of such elevation may be collected from that Hydulphus, of whom the chronicle says, on his being made archbishop of Treves, “Potius est tractus quam electus ‡.”

Thomas Bradwardine, the learned and holy archbishop of Canterbury, so deep a divine, that at Oxford he was called “Doctor Profundus,” so great a mathematician, and philosopher, and general scholar, in all the liberal sciences, that he was the admiration of his age; though confessor to Edward III. and with him constantly in all his wars, from whom he might have had many preferments, was so far from wishing to succeed by honours, that it was long before he could be persuaded to fill a prebendal stall in Lincoln. In the year 1107, Vulgrin, disciple of Ives of Chartres, fled from Troyes, when he found that Pope Pascal II., there presiding in council, was willing to give him up to the inhabitants of Dole, who sought him, to fill the episcopal see of their city §. Pythagoras, who never admitted any one to his friend-

* Hist. Norman. Lib. XII.

† Annal. Camaldulens. Lib. LXVIII.

‡ Chronic. Senoniensis, Lib. I. cap. XI. apud Dacher. Spicileg. III.

§ Hist. du Diocèse de Troyes, 272.

ship, whom he had not seen to be a despiser of honours, during three years of probation *, would have found no deficiency of subjects duly qualified for his esteem, in this respect, had the different ranks of the Catholic hierarchy been presented. He at least would have been satisfied with such evidence as that to which the cardinal of Winchester appeals in his reply to proud Gloucester; "If I were covetous, perverse, ambitious, as he will have me, how am I so poor? Or how haps it, I seek not to advance or raise myself, but keep my wonted calling?"

The spirit of these ages is expressed in remarkable terms by Parisius, a monk of Camaldoli, in the thirteenth century, whose sentence is found recorded in the necrology of the convent of St. Christina at Bologna. "He who wishes to be chosen," says this holy man, "is not chosen by the Lord; for he saith, I have chosen you. Let no one, therefore, endeavour to obtain his own election. The Lord chose David, whom his father Isai despised or neglected, because my ways are not as thy ways, saith the Lord. Woe then to those who seek to be chosen †."

Again we must observe, that they bore no resemblance to those Arian bishops, of whom St. Jerome says, "From the bosom of Plato, or of Aristophanes, they are raised to the episcopacy, not differing from Gentiles, so that a Church which receives bishops from the heretics, does not so much receive bishops as priests, from the capitol ‡." The Irish synod, in the eighth century, whose decrees were published by Dacherius, says, "He who is to be ordained a bishop, must previously be examined, in order to ascertain whether he is prudent by nature, docile, temperate in his manners, sober, chaste, affable to the humble, merciful, learned, instructed in the law of the Lord, cautious in the interpretation of the Scriptures §," without once alluding to the accomplishments which the world would require for those whom it invested with pre-eminence.

* Jamblich de Pythagoric. Vita, cap. 17.

† Annal. Camaldul. Lib. XXXIV.

‡ S. Hieron. advers. Luciferianos.

§ Capitula selecta Hibernens. cap. 7. apud Dacher. Spicileg. tom. IX.

At the council of Rheims, where Pope Calixtus II. presided; on the first day, being Sunday, after the Pope had preached on the Gospel, the cardinal, bishop of Palastrine, made a discourse on the obligations of the Episcopal office, and proposed as an example, Jacob guarding the flocks of Laban; who said, “I was pierced with heat during the day, and with cold during the night; and sleep fled from my eyes; thy sheep and thy goats have not been sterile; I have not eaten the rams of thy flock.”

The verses which the ancient historian of Ely addresses to the blessed Adelwold, express the episcopal character, as it appears in the history of the middle ages.

“ O decus Ecclesiæ, vas nobile philosophiæ!
Cujus ad exemplum Christi fies homo templum,
Vir pie, sancte, bone pater, Adelwolde Patronæ
Inter opes seculi sitiebas gaudia cœli *.”

Anquetil, in his history of Rheims, speaking of the archbishops of that see, boasts of having recalled to the memory of men, the merit too little known of Vulfar, the capacity of Foulques, the justice of Hervé, the piety of Courtenai, the sweetness and affability of Ursins, the liberality of Briçonnet, the ability of Gervais, of Guy Paré, of Alberic de Humbert, and the truly episcopal qualities of Guillaume de Trie, of Robert de Lenoncourt, and of Guillaume Giffort †. He says, that many were models of holiness, of wisdom, and goodness, in difficult times.

In early ages, St. Remi, and St. Rigobert, the one insensible to the delights of a court which sought to please him, the other superior to the persecutions of an angry conqueror, showed in arduous circumstances, how the ministers of Jesus Christ ought to act, in prosperity and misfortune. St. Camelien, bishop of Troyes, successor of St. Loup, in the year 507, assisted at the council of Lyons, where Sidonius saw him, who thus describes him in his epistles ‡. “ Of a truth, he is such a holy man, that he seems to have brought to life again, in his own manners and conversation, the Bishop St. Loup, his master, so deservedly esteemed the first of all the prelates of

* Hist. Eliensis, Lib. I. c. 6. apud Gale Hist. Brit. tom. III.

† L. XXII.

‡ Lib. VII. 13.

Gaul, then living. O what gravity and sweetness were united in this holy man! He loves learning; but above all, that learning which has regard to piety and the Catholic religion. In all his actions and intentions, it is Jesus Christ that we behold and hear. He loves to oblige rather than to be repaid with gratitude; so humble is he that in all places, and to all men, he wishes to yield place; and his admonitions are given with such grace and delicacy, that no one is offended or wounded; and all are equally satisfied with his counsels."

In order to ascertain how far the true episcopal type corresponded with their characters, the bishops of past times used to interrogate themselves after the manner of St. Augustine on the anniversary of his consecration, inquiring whether disturbed by various cares and difficulties, they had not heard any one, as he desired, or beheld any one with a displeased countenance, or uttered a severer word, or had afflicted any one in trouble or poverty, by an inconsiderate reply, or had neglected relieving any one in want, or discouraged him by their brow, or had been angry against any one through false suspicion *. Mark now the details given by ancient authors, respecting St. Edmund of Canterbury; for his later biographers pass over many things which though minute, are not less remarkable. It was his custom every day and night, to meditate upon the passion of Christ. While treasurer of the Church of Salisbury, he was so bountiful to the poor, that for a part of the year, he used to repair to a monastery of Stanley, from wanting means to live. The abbot, Stephen de Laxiton, a venerable man, used to advise him to be more prudent; but he replied, "I wish to show that theologians are not the avaricious men that calumnious persons report them to be; and I wish to entertain courtiers and secular men that I may gain them to God." He was never angry during his whole life but once; and that was on his journey from Paris to England, when his companion, through negligence, lost the Bible with which he had entrusted him; and then he quickly recovered his tranquillity. He had always an ivory image of the Blessed Virgin before his face, upon the desk which supported his book at study, with these words inscribed, "A child is born unto us."

* Serm. de propr. Natali.

When the monks of Canterbury came to Salisbury to signify to him his election, he refused for three days, and at last complied, when told by the bishop of Salisbury that he would sin mortally if he did not suffer himself to be elected. When primate of England, he rather feared the burden than felt pride from the dignity ; on a journey he would hear the confession of the poorest man that applied to him ; he used to pass whole nights in prayer and meditation without sleep. He always honoured and worshipped the female sex, on account of the Blessed Virgin, and its devotion ; he used to give portions to poor young women, to enable them to be married well. The law and custom of the land adjudged to him the manor of a certain knight which was to be redeemed afterwards for a sum of eighty pounds sterling, which sum as soon as he received, he gave to be divided among the four daughters of the knight, that there might be no delay to their marriage. There was another custom of the land which ordained, that when the father of a family died, his lord was to receive the best animal that he possessed, of whatever kind it might be, in token of his being the lord. A certain widow came to him, entreating that he would restore her draught horse ; to whom he replied, “ Good woman, this is the law of the land, and the custom requires that your deceased husband’s lord should have his best animal.” Then turning to others, he said in Latin, “ Veraciter hæc institutio legis est diabolicæ, non divinæ.” “ After the captive has lost her husband, the best thing that her dying husband has left her, must be taken from her ; this is not a good custom.” Then turning to the woman, he said to her in English, “ Woman, if I should lend your animal to you, will you take good care of it ? ” “ Yes, my lord, as much care as if it were my own.” Then he ordered his bailiff to restore it without delay. He saw the blessed Thomas of Canterbury in a vision, and tried to kiss his feet. Being obliged to fly from England, for maintaining the rights of the Church, he took refuge in the abbey of Pontigny, the general asylum for English exiles, on account of the sanctity of its superiors. And he was glad to be banished to the same country which had received St. Thomas of Canterbury, and Stephen Langton, his predecessors. Here he fell sick, and when he could no longer repair to the gate of the monastery, to give alms to the poor, he

gave money to his chaplain, and charged him to discharge this office with all charity, and prudent discernment. Having received the adorable eucharist, he caused the cross, with the images of the Blessed Mary and St. John, to be placed before his eyes, which receiving, he kissed it, shedding many tears. Then causing wine and water to be brought to him, he washed the wounds of the nails and of the lance, and then signing it with the cross, he drank that ablution, saying, “ Haurietis aquas in gaudio de fontibus salvatoris.” All present admired the expression of his face, which reflected the joy of his mind. To the physician who felt his pulse, saying, “ It was very weak,” he replied, “ That he was ready for his journey, being fortified after the manner of Catholics.” Then he ordered the tapers, and all things requisite for his obsequies, to be prepared ; he breathed no sigh, and evinced no symptom of death ; but sat or lay clothed on his bed, with his head reclining on his hand. At length, at sunrise, on the Friday, the day on which Christ tasted death for the dead, he slept the sleep of peace, without any previous struggle, and passed from the miseries of men, to the joy of angels. His body was buried in solemn state in the monastery of Pontigny, in Champagne, which is on the road about half way between Rome and St. James, a house which no one devout to God ever passes near without visiting, and, therefore, the fame of his sanctity was spread through all lands *.

During the middle ages, innumerable prelates imparted to different cities and dioceses, that charm which the memory of Fenelon has been able in latter times, to associate with the name of France, which though desolate and stript of most memorials, is still embalmed with the fragrance of his virtues. Such in the thirteenth century was Eberhard II. archbishop of Salzburg, called by the people, the father of the poor, the lover of peace †. The terms with which Alcuin begins his letter to Arno, archbishop of Salzburg, indicate how faithfully he discharged the duties of his office. “ Aquilæ per Alpes volanti, per campos currenti, per urbes ambulanti, humilis terrigena salutem †.”

“ Blessed be God,” cries Ives de Chartres, writing to

* Vita ejus apud Martene Thesaurus Anecdota. tom. III.

† Germania Sacra, tom. II. 343. † Id. tom. II. 118.

Thomas, archbishop of York, “who hath made your conversation to shine forth in the darkness of a barbarous nation *.”

When Petrarch was at Prague, he formed a union with two prelates of distinguished merit, Ernest de Pardowitz, archbishop of that see, and John Ocsko, bishop of Olmutz. Ernest used to say to him sometimes, “Friend, I am concerned to see you among barbarians.” “Nothing, however,” says Petrarch, “was less barbarous than these prelates. They were as gentle, polite, and affable, as if they had been born at Athens.” Hear how he speaks of the Bishop of Lember, on reading his letter to the Cardinal of Colonna. “Every line of it breathes modesty, the love of moderation, freedom from ambition, and contentment with his lot. In it are the principles of the soundest philosophy, expressed in the most noble and exact manner.” What a love of justice, and what solid virtue shone forth in that illustrious Ives, bishop of Chartres, whose Epistles and Decretals throw such light upon the contemporaneous history. Ives was not a courtly prelate. “If I did not thank you sooner,” says he, to Samson, bishop of Worcester, who had sent him a present, “it was because I am a slow man, of few words, and of not sufficient urbanity; but I am not slow to repay your kindness with deeds†.”

This picture is unlike the preceding, but the saintly character admitted of infinite variety in the reception and employment of graces; and so clearly was this seen in history, that it may be supposed the church alludes to it when she sings “Behold a great priest, who in his days pleased God. There was not found the like to him, who kept the law of the Most High.” It may be remarked, that frequently writers, the most hostile to the Catholic hierarchy, have been compelled to speak in admiration of its justice. “The order of bishops in this kingdom,” says Swinburn, “leads a very exemplary life, much retired from the world, expending their great revenues in feeding the poor, building and endowing churches, convents, and hospitals, and allowing very scantily for their own expenses‡. Bourgoign gives a similar description

* Ivonis Carnot. Epist. CCXV.

† Epist. CCVII.

§ Travels through Spain, 1775, vol. I. p. 125.

of the manner in which the prelates of Spain employed their power and wealth, when speaking of the Cardinal Lozenzana, archbishop of Toledo*. On the road from Madrid to Saragossa, he finds a village built by the Bishop of Signenza, on which occasion he observes, that “everywhere in Spain, the bishops are at the head of the benefactors of their respective cantons†.”

Don Lewis de Armundarez, of a noble family in Navarre, abbot, bishop, and finally archbishop of Taragona, after all his promotions, died so poor, that his sepulchre in the monastery of Val-Parayso, could only be erected with the alms of the faithful. So bountiful was he to the poor, that, as St. Bernard says, “inter aurum sine auro pertransiit ‡.”

Bishops frequently employed the wealth of the Church in works of secular utility. Fortunatus, himself a bishop, celebrates in verse the praise of Felix, a bishop, who cut down mountains, filled up valleys, banked out rivers, and drained extensive regions§, and Cassiodorus exhorts Æmilian, a bishop, to put the finishing hand to a vast aqueduct which he had begun, that, like another Moses, he might give water to the fainting people||.

It was Bishop Crispus, in the reign of Severus, who built the first stone bridge over the Tessin at Pavia, and raised the river's banks to preserve the lands from inundation¶|. The writers of the middle age, say that the bishop was the eye of all the land. Olaus Magnus relates that John Magnus, archbishop of Upsal, his brother and predecessor, when visiting his diocese, having purchased at his own expense instruments, gave them to the people, and taught them, by persons who were skilled in the art, the mode of procuring salt, by which he conferred a benefit upon the inhabitants of the north for ever**. The names of Catholic bishops are still associated on the tongues of the people with various great works relating to the drainage of the fens in the eastern counties of England. It was Humbert, archbishop of Lyons, who constructed the stone bridge lined with houses over

* Tableau de l'Espagne, vol. III. 4. † Id. III. 31.

‡ Notitiæ Abbat. Ord. Cisterciens. Lib. VI. 8.

§ Poem, III. || Leg. IV. Ep. 31.

¶ Bernard. Sacci Hist. Ticinensis, Lib. VI. c. 9.

** Olai Magni Gentium septent. Hist. Lib. XIII. c. 6.

the Saone in that city, being himself the architect and chief contributor*.

When the Saracines had destroyed the city of Frejus, in Provence, in the tenth century, it was Riculphe, the bishop of that see, whom thirty years after, heaven raised up to rebuild it, which he did at his own expense, in the gothic, durable style, as we find it at the present day†. What holy men were those powerful lords, the bishops of Nantes, jealous of the rights of their see, but also jealous of the public liberty. Nantes still venerates the memory of St. Felix, one of her earliest bishops, who dug the canal which yet bears his name, and made a fine navigable river of the Erdre, which was then stagnant, spreading into a pestilential marsh. Guillaume de Champagne, archbishop of Rheims in 1179, re-established the popular office of sheriff in that city. His charter began as follows: “As the princes of the earth, in preserving the rights and liberties of their subjects, acquire the love of God and of their people, and similarly by violating and changing ancient customs, expose themselves to incur the anger of God and to lose the confidence of their subjects, therefore, dear children and faithful citizens, we restore you to possession of the privileges which were granted to you in ancient times, and which the changes introduced by some of your lords have not been able utterly to abolish.” In like manner, the Archbishop Renaud de Chartres conferred the most eminent favours on the people of Rheims‡. Speaking of the bishop of Beauvais, Ives de Chartres says, “whose simplicity has this laudable character, that it can neither please those who act perversely, nor displease those who are rightly wise§. The φρενῶν ἐπίσκοπον had the wisdom of the serpent and the gentleness of the dove. In fact, the manners of these men of power and magnificence were characterized by the utmost meekness. Ives de Chartres always styles himself “the humble minister of the church of Chartres.” On one occasion, when St. Francis de Sales came to Lyons, the two courts of France and Savoy being in that city, and persons of the highest dignity being ambitious

* Paradin. Hist. de Lyon, Lib. II. 33.

† Hist. de Frejus, Lib. II.

‡ Hist. de Rheims, Lib. II. 222.

§ Iponis Carnot. Decret. Epist. III.

of entertaining him, the holy bishop would accept of no other lodging but the gardener's room of the Convent of the Visitation. St. Ambrose, as we learn from St. Augustin's Confessions, used to receive every one who came to see him, and admit them without any announcement into his private chamber. Bishop Theodotus used to give the litter to his clerk, and mount himself upon horseback*; and we had occasion to remark before that in the fourth century, St. Martin, bishop of Tours, made the visitation of his diocese mounted on an ass. It is recorded of the apostle of Ireland that, until his fifty-fifth year, when he was advanced to the episcopal degree, he used always to travel on foot, but that afterwards he used a chariot, after the manner of the country, and that over his other garments he wore a white cowl.

Many persons at present would be not a little amazed, I suspect, if they could be shown what sort of personage was a Catholic archbishop of Canterbury. Here then is one, who flourished in the thirteenth century, when that see was invested with all the power and pomp that kings and people could confer upon it. The name of this ecclesiastical potentate is John Peccham. As a Franciscan friar he had travelled over many parts of Europe on foot. He went from England to Padua, to the general assembly of his order, and returned, without having once used a horse or carriage of any description. It was contrary to the wish of his heart, and only out of holy obedience, when the mitre was placed on his head; and so little have his manners been affected by his new dignity, that you can often see him still discharging the lowest offices with simplicity, and even employed in lighting the wax-tapers of his own church. You are pleased, perhaps, with his humility, but you will add, that learning and high intellectual qualities are still more essential in such a station. Well, reader, you find them also in this archbishop, who is the most learned man of his age. When at Rome, teaching theology in the sacred palace, such was the opinion of his wisdom, that men of the highest order came to hear him; and when he used to pass through the school, bishops and cardinals used to rise up and uncover, and stand bare-headed before him; though when he continued to teach after his election to the see of

* Sophron. Prat. Spirit. 33.

Canterbury, no one of the cardinals then used to move, because formerly they said, they showed that honour to his virtue, in which they felt themselves his inferiors, but then it would seem as if they paid it to his dignity, in which they were superior. But neither learning, nor humility, you continue, can compensate for the neglect of the poor, and an indifference to the interests of the people. Little do you know these men, if you imagine that such charges apply to them. This great theologian and philosopher is a lover of the poor, and often their companion; he clothes them, feeds them, waits upon them, and washes their feet. He rises hungry and thirsty from the episcopal board, at which others have had a joyful feast. His palaces are open to the stranger and the destitute, but he loves only the house of God, and the place where his glory dwelleth. In the age of feudal severity he writes against Earl Warren, in behalf of the poor people, whose corn is trampled on by the deer and stags from his woods, without their daring to preserve it. Of all abuses he is the zealous reformer. Severity of government, immoderate exactions, multiplicity of forensic altercations, neglect of preaching in the episcopal order, and immorality of manners, he denounces and opposes with prudence and efficacy*. How few of the moderns are aware that this was the general type of the episcopal character in the middle ages, when the bishop's throne was established in justice and his seat in equity.

The heroic spirit of the middle ages, which induced so often the chief to choose the part of an inferior, when it furnished an opportunity for showing greater devotion, appears in the conduct of the men who governed the church. "Passing by Carcassonne," says a pilgrim clerk, "having demanded an audience of the bishop, I was told that he was gone to a village at a distance, to visit and console the inhabitants, who were attacked by the plague." But it would be endless to multiply these details. In conclusion, as we always close our survey by a visit to the tombs, among which it is so often sweet to stray, we can read a few of the ancient epitaphs which describe the pontiffs of the middle age. On the sepulchre of St. Andreas, bishop of Fundana, which is in the church of Cajetana, we find these lines :

* Wadding. Annal. Minorum, V.

“ Pande tuas, paradise, fores, sedemque beatam :
 Andreæ meritum suscipe Pontificis.
 Custos justitiae, doctrinæ, et pacis amator,
 Quem vocat ad summum vita beata bonum.
 Plenus amore Dei nescivit vivere mundo,
 At famulo Christi gloria Christus erat.
 Quem meditata fides et credita semper inhæsit,
 Hæc te usque ad cœlos et super astra tulit.
 Nunquam de manibus sibi lex divina recessit :
 Elogium Domini vixit in ore suo *.”

Read next the epitaph of Ugolinus Malabranca Urbevetanus, an Augustinian, and bishop of Rimini, who died in 1374, a man of profound erudition.

“ Carior est veterum virtus, doctrinaque, mores :
 (Heu, ubi prisca fides ! lugemere illa solet.)
 Virtuti rectæ veteri Urbevetanus adhæsit,
 Urbevetus, studiis, indole, more, vetus †.”

Pyrrhus Aloysius Castellomata fell a victim to the disease which swept away the people of his diocese in 1656, and on his tomb in his cathedral we read,

“ Majus amoris opus nullum est, quam ponere vitam
 Pro grege, pro patria, religione, fide ‡.”

Adelard, bishop of St. Agatha of the Goths, before the year 1000, was buried in the cathedral which he had built there, on which was this inscription :

“ Vitæ præsentis bona qui labentia sentis,
 Ad cœli sedem currito, coge pedem.
 Templum fundavi tamen hoc, et sic decoravi,
 Curavique Deo posse placere meo §.”

A bishop of Saltzburg is thus described by Alcuin, who composed the inscription on his tomb :

“ Judicium promat justum tua lingua, sacerdos,
 Ut Christo placeat quicquid in ore sonat.
 Ore sonet Christi laudes, et vera loquatur,
 Et totum redolet pectus amore Dei ||.”

But without wandering so far, let us only enter the cathedrals of Winchester and Canterbury, and behold

* Italia Sacra, tom. I. 721.

† Id. I. 428.

‡ Id. tom. VIII. 238.

§ Id. VIII. 347.

|| Mabillon, Vet. Analect.

the silent and half-ruined sepulchres of the pontiffs and abbots of the middle ages, and then, indeed, he must be a good orator who shall be able, by any fluent discourse, to counteract the impression of these mute stones, and convince us that these were not the men whom the Lord crowned at the gates of Paradise and invested with a stole of imperishable glory.

Such, then, was the type of the episcopal character so often reduced to practice by great and humble Christians during the ages of faith. What has antiquity to produce comparable to such characters? I do not ask what have the modern disciplines, because their fairest images partake of justice only in proportion to the affinity between them and the Catholic standard, as their own historian would lead us to conclude. "The bishops," saith Burnet, "generally grew haughty and neglected their functions: some few that were stricter and more learned, did lean grossly to popery."

Abuse and scandal must of necessity come, though infinite justice has declared that inexcusable are those through whom they come. Men talk of unmasking priests, as if any persons had been more loud in censure of all vices in priests than priests themselves, or than those whom priests have canonized, as may be witnessed in the third book of St. Catherine of Sienna. The clergy by all kinds of monuments chose to perpetuate the memory of sins within their own order, that future pastors might be warned never to forsake justice. What mean these four images of canons standing against two pillars outside the chancel of the cathedral of Evreux, on the side of the cemetery, three of which are hooded in the usual manner, while the fourth stands apart, bare headed, and holding his hand on his breast, in sign of penitence? Tradition informs us that this man having fallen into heresy, had been interdicted by the chapter, but having abjured his error, and being re-established in all his honours, it was still required by the chapter that these statues should remain, when the church was rebuilt by Henry the first, king of England, and Ouen, bishop of Evreux*. Hear how St. Augustin speaks in his epistle to Felicia: "I conjure you, then, be not troubled to excess by these scandals of which you are a witness, which

* Hist. d'Evreux, 11.

have been expressly predicted by our Lord, in order that when they arrived, we should remember that they had been foretold, and that our confidence should not be shaken. Offences must come. What are men but beings who seek their own convenience, and not what belongs to Jesus Christ? Among those who occupy the pastoral chairs, if there are some who seek only the interests of their flocks, there are also others who desire only temporal honours and the advantages of time. It must needs be that till the consummation of ages, these two classes of pastors should be perpetuated even in the bosom of the Catholic church. In fact, if in the apostle's time there were Christians who deserved the title of false brethren, and whose fatal blindness the apostle had to deplore, if he supported them nevertheless with patience, instead of cutting them off with severity, how much more probable is it that there should be similar men in these days, since our Lord said, in allusion to the latter times, that iniquity would abound, and that the charity of the greatest number would wax cold? but what follows should console us, since he adds, ‘but he that shall persevere unto the end shall be saved.’ There are good and wicked men among the pastors, as there are good and wicked men among their flocks. Now hear what the Scriptures saith of these wicked pastors: ‘They are seated on the chair of Moses. Do what they say, but take heed how you imitate their works, for they say and do not.’ In conformity with this advice, the sheep of Jesus Christ hear his voice even by the mouth of evil pastors, and do not abandon unity, because the good which they hear them utter is not of their own but of God. Behold, then, how these same sheep may still feed in safety, because even under bad pastors, they can nourish themselves with the pastures of Jesus Christ. St. Paul, though he invites the faithful to become his imitators, yet severely blames those who wish to avail themselves of the name of apostles, in order to introduce divisions into the church, and who say, I am a disciple of Paul. Is it Paul, then, who has been crucified for you? Is it in the name of Paul that you have been baptized? From this we learn that good pastors are those who do not seek themselves but Jesus Christ; and also that the good sheep, while they apply themselves to imitate the virtues of their pastors, do not place their hopes in these same pastors, whose ministry is confined to the

task of reuniting them all in one flock, but in Jesus Christ, by whose blood they have been redeemed. So that if, by chance, they meet with bad pastors, who preach the doctrines of Christ, and who do their own works, they then practise what they say, and do not what they do, and they do not forsake the pastures of truth because of these children of corruption. For be it repeated once more, in the Catholic church, which is not confined to a corner of Africa like that of the Donatists, but which is spread throughout the universe, and which increases and bears fruit according to the promise of our Divine Master, there are good and bad. As for those who are separated, as long as they are in opposition to her, they cannot be good. In vain will the works of some appear to bear testimony to their virtue: they are bad at least on account of their separation, since the Lord has said, he who is not with me is against me."

The motive of kings and princes in conferring dukedoms and baronies upon bishops, was partly in order to enhance their dignity in the eyes of the barbarians who were but newly, and often at first but partially converted to the faith. Thus we read of Canute, "observing how little veneration a rude people would have for bishops, lest the possession of such a title should be left among private men, he imparted to them, by decree, a share in the civil judicial power, and made them dukes and nobles*."

By the ancient emperors of Germany it was a prescription that, on all solemn feasts at Mayence, the archbishop of that see should be seated on the emperor's right hand, and the abbot of Fulda on his left†. It is true that such honour could intrinsically confer but little upon those to whom the Lord made a covenant of peace, who by Him were made princes, that the dignity of priesthood should be to them for ever. Nevertheless this policy was well intended, and, under general circumstances, calculated to produce excellent fruits of justice. Incidentally, however, it led to great abuse. It was well that the highest nobles should come forward to honour the entry of the chief pastor of their diocese; but when in compensation for such homage, they could, like the proprietors

* Baron. An. 1081, n. 37.

† Chron. Slavor. Lib. III. cap. 9.

of the lands and dependencies of De Thuisy, seneschals of Rheims, claim a right to reside in the episcopal palace during the residence of the bishop, and keep with them three horses, three dogs, and three hawks, and all at the expense of the archbishop, the evil bore no proportion to the advantage arising from a nobleman holding a bridle during a procession, or serving the first dish at a banquet. But this was not all; for to the possession of feudal domains must be traced those warlike measures which certain bishops felt themselves under the necessity of adopting, in conformity with what was required by the feudal law. The pious abbot Ermoldo Nigello, forced to take arms in spite of his habit, boasts, indeed, of not having wounded any one, and carried a proof of it upon his shield.

“ Hoc egomet scutum humeris ensemque revinctum
Gessi, sed nemo me feriente dolet.
Peppin hæc aspiciens risit, miratus— * ”

Gozlin, bishop of Paris, during the siege by the Normans, in the year 885, from his rank and birth, had the greatest authority in the city. Five years before Louis the Third had confided to him the care of the kingdom. He is styled by Abbon, the monk of St. Germain, in his poem on the Siege of Paris, “ *Præsul Domini et dulcissimus heros†.* ” Yet his warlike office seems to have been chiefly exercised in raising fortifications, sending for assistance, conducting treaties, and organizing the material means for defending his country. In other respects, he is said, by Abbon, to have nourished his flock as a benign pastor ‡.

The moderns, however, have not the merit of having been the first to discover that such intermixture of contradictory characters was scandalous and abusive. “ O new and detestable perversity, to prefer warfare to the clerical office, the forum to the church, human to divine things, earthly to heavenly! ” This is what St. Bernard exclaims, on hearing that Stephen Garande, archdeacon of Paris, had the office of seneschal in the court of Louis the Sixth, king of France. The assumption of arms by

* *De reb. gest. Ludov. Pii, tom. II. Rer. Ital. Script.*

† *Abbonis De Lutecia Parisiorum a Normannis obsessa, Lib. I. 23.*
‡ *Id.*

the clergy, was always considered irregular and inconsistent. William of Jumiège, speaks of a certain Raoul, surnamed the Clerk, on account of his study of letters, and also called “male-couronne,” because, applying also to chivalrous exercises, he did not well maintain the clerical gravity*.

The Irish synod, in the eighth century, decreed that if any priest should be slain in war or in a popular tumult, no oblations or prayers were to be offered up for him, though his body might be buried†. Indeed, all the ancient councils were most strict in forbidding the clergy to join in any military expedition, or be accessory to the shedding of either pagan or christian blood.

Charlemagne, attending to the remonstrances of the Holy See, and to the prayers of the bishops, published this decree: “At the entreaty of the apostolic seat, and with the advice of all our faithful, and especially of the bishops and other priests, we correcting ourselves, and giving an example to our posterity, express our will that no priest shall ever go against the enemy, unless two or three bishops chosen by the others, for the purpose of giving benediction, and of preaching, and of reconciling the people, and with them chosen priests, who may receive them to the sacrament of penance, and celebrate mass, and take care of the sick, and administer to them the unction of holy oil with divine prayers, and above all provide that no one may depart from the world without viaticum‡.

The bishop of Beauvais, on being taken prisoner by Richard I., wrote to the pope, imploring him to intercede for his deliverance, with the king of England. The pope’s answer was as follows, “Celestin, bishop, servant of the servant of God, to his dear brother, Philip, bishop of Beauvais, benediction: you inform me that a calamity has befallen you; I am not astonished at it. You chose to leave the pacific government of the flock for the field of battle, the mitre for the helmet, the pastoral staff for the lance, the chasuble for the cuirass, the ring for the sword; you have sought—well, and you have found; you have struck—you are, in your turn, stricken. Never-

* Hist. Lib. VII. c. 10.

† Lib. XXXIX. cap. 14; apud Dacher. Spicileg. tom. IX.

‡ An. 800. Con. Gall. tom. II. 235. cap. Lib. VII. c. 91. 103.

theless, I shall write to Richard to ask for your deliverance." The well-known answer of the king must have been therefore suggested by what had been previously pronounced by the ecclesiastical authority, of which modern historians take care that their readers shall know nothing. It should be observed, that in general, under these warlike and political bishops, some of whom were not even priests, the churches were not allowed to suffer, being governed in their absence by coadjutors, who took personal care of the flock * ; and after all, it is curious to observe, that even these abuses worked to the good of the church, as when they gave rise to the foundation of one of her most illustrious orders, for it was the horror which was inspired by Manasses, the proud and impious potentate, who said "it would be well to be archbishop of Rheims, if it were not necessary to sing mass," that induced Bruno, in order to avoid the spectacle of his vanity, in company with some other noble clerks, to withdraw from that city, and become the founder of the Carthusian family †. Nevertheless, even in Italy, in the tenth century, when evils seemed almost to have attained the climax, sanctity was not confined to the apostolic chair, for there were then several most holy prelates, such as Theodoric and Grimoald, archbishops of Pisa, Adalbert Bergomatensis, a man of great sanctity, wisdom, and courage, who defended his city against the barbarians, and restored it from ruins, Notharius bishop of Verona Gebehard, archbishop of Ravenna, Oegidius, bishop of Tusculum, Peter and Gauzlin, bishops of Padua, and many others, who were true examples of the apostolic life in evil days. No doubt some things were formerly tolerated, which would now be deemed insufferable; but even in those cases we must be slow to judge. "I am not ignorant" says Thomassinus, "with what horror and grief, pious men, and lovers of ecclesiastical discipline, now regard such customs; and their grief is to be applauded: but neither should we condemn the number of holy men who practised or tolerated it. One and the same wisdom and charity order us now to rejoice in their abolition, and forbid us to condemn these men. It will be no small fruit if we derive from the whole re-

* Anquetil, Hist. de Reims, Lib. I. c. 9. IV. 237.

† Guiberti de Novigent. de vita propria, Lib. I. c. 11.

view of these ages that moderation of mind, that amplitude of genius, that equability, which piously and religiously embraces and reveres the ancient discipline of the church, not always similar to itself, but always fashioned by the same wisdom and charity *.

To examine the sacerdotal character in the remaining members of the clergy, during the ages of faith, will be a task of no difficulty. The testimony of an historian who has studied in the original sources the history of the middle ages, must correspond with that delivered by Montiel, when he says, attesting the results of his own observations, “I have lived with that good, that excellent race of men, the French rectors; I have known them perfectly, both externally and internally, and I believe in my conscience that if it had existed in the time of Noah, the human race would have been saved, had there been necessary for its absolution, not merely ten, but ten thousand just †.” “I have known many of the old French clergy,” says another distinguished writer, “and it is the remembrance of my life which is the most flattering to myself, and the most agreeable ‡.” Addison’s idea of the ministers of the Anglican discipline in its classic age, is that of “one of the three great professions greatly overburdened with practitioners, and filled with multitudes of ingenious gentlemen that starve one another § ;” in which judgment he was not singular, for Burton complains, that in consequence of the avarice of the lay patrons, “poor university men like himself, having at last obtained a small benefice, are soon made weary of it, if not of their lives, so that many became maltsters, graziers, chapmen, and daily converse with a company of idiots and clowns || ;” a cruel alternative certainly for ingenious men of refined breeding. Of their genius and erudition there have been left indeed abundant monuments; still this testimony of friends and disciples is not such as would be rendered to men who followed the standard proposed to the Catholic clergy in the chapter which the church reads at the vespers of a confessor, “Beatus vir, qui inventus est sine macula, et qui post aurum non

* De Vet. et Nova Disciplina, pars III. Lib. I. cap. 45.

† Hist. des François, tom. III. p. 377.

‡ Rubichon, du Mécanisme de la Société, 322.

§ Spec. 21.

|| I. 3.

abiit, nec speravit in pecunia et thesauris." The church immediately demands, "Quis est hic, et laudabimus eum? Fecit enim mirabilia in vita sua." Yet she knew well that the voice of the people in most towns and villages during the ages of faith, would have answered without hesitation that it was their own pastor who placed his hope not in uncertain riches, but in the prayers of the poor, of whom they might have said, in the words of St. Bernard, "non evangelizat, ut comedat; sed comedit, ut evangelizet." Reader, it is guides belonging to the Catholic camp, who, while mortal, began to exhibit the glory of that second stole, and not the ingenious gentlemen described by Addison, that you are about to behold, therefore

—“ Down, down ; bend low
Thy knees ; behold God's angel ; fold thy hands :
Now shalt thou see true ministers indeed *.”

God was angry with the shepherds of Israel, who fed themselves, and who fed not the flock. "What was weak ye did not strengthen, and what was sick ye did not heal ; what was broken ye did not bind up, what was fallen ye did not raise, and what was lost ye did not seek : but with austerity ye did govern them, and with power : and my sheep are dispersed because there was no pastor, and they are made the prey of all the beasts of the field, and they are scattered. My flocks wandered over all mountains, and upon every high hill, and over the whole face of the earth they are dispersed, and there was no one to seek after them †." That the Catholic clergy realized the description of the good shepherd, as commemorated in the Gospel, is a fact of history borne out by the continued observation of mankind, which the supporters of the modern discipline were constrained repeatedly to admit, as when the Anglican Dean of Winchester, in his sermon before a convocation, in the year 1742, said, "So that if we were to consider them, not with regard to what they believe, but to the diligence with which they look after their flocks, we should think that they were the reformed at present, and that our reformation was still to come." What were the ideas respecting the sacerdotal character which prevailed in the middle ages? St. Ambrose had said, "the duty of a priest is to injure no one, and to wish to render good service to all men ;" and St. Bon-

* Dante Purg. II.

† Ezek. xxxiv.

ventura sums up the function in these words, “ It is of the sacerdotal office that all who are deprived of human assistance in this world may be able, by its tuition, to find a remedy.” Now that this was a supernatural character, even the philosophy of the Gentiles might lead us to conclude. Socrates assuredly would teach us to regard the Catholic clergy as divine men ; for he says, “ it does not seem to me to be human to disregard all the affairs of one’s self, and to neglect for so many years one’s domestic interests, and to be always occupied about the interests of other men, *iδίᾳ ἐκάστῳ προσιόντα ὡς περ πατέρα ή ἀδελφὸν πρεσβύτερον, πειθοντα ἐπιμελεῖσθαι ἀρετῆς* *.” Might not one suppose that he was speaking of the men commemorated by the church, who despised the life of the world, and came to the celestial kingdoms ? The fact is, that in a priest of the holy Catholic and Roman church every thing was divine—his commission, his authority, the origin of his ordination, the duties which it imposed, the fidelity with which he fulfilled them ; with him was associated no idea of a beginning from below, of a political origin, which rendered it advisable to invoke Angerona, the goddess of silence, as in the old days of Rome, when the true name of that city was never disclosed to the people : there was no break and interruption in the titles of his authority, in consequence of the adoption at one period of a rite, which being opposed to the institution of Christ, and the apostolic traditions, and besides embracing manifest heresies, was necessarily invalid †. St. Ambrose says, that “ Pythagoras in forbidding his disciples to live in a popular manner, had derived the idea from the Holy Scriptures, which speak of taking off the shoes, of shaking off the dust of a common way, of leaving the people and ascending the mountains. “ You see then,” he adds, “ the separation—nothing plebeian should be found in priests, nothing vulgar, nothing common with the study, custom, and manner of the undisciplined multitude. The sacerdotal dignity requires for itself sober gravity, serious life, and singular weight, separate from the crowd ‡.” Hugo of St. Victor shows that this is symbolically implied in the ecclesiasti-

* Plato Apolog. 31.

† Joan. Devoti Inst. Can. Lib. II. tit. 2.

‡ Epist. Lib. I. 6.

cal ritual; "For," saith he, "bishops are consecrated on Sundays, because it was on the Sunday that the apostles received the Holy Ghost, and also as being the day of our Lord's resurrection, that they may be admonished to walk in newness of life; but priests and other ministers of the church are ordained on Saturdays, the sabbath day, that they may learn to rest for ever from all servile work, and to devote themselves to the service of God *." By the council of Narbonne, in 589, clerks were forbidden to loiter on the public places, or to take part in the conversations held there. "The life of a priest" says cardinal Bona. "who would worthily say mass, is divine and superhuman, and opposite to the mundane, carnal life. He who lives thus, withdraws from creatures, and adheres to God alone. God alone is in his intelligence, alone in his will, alone in his conversation, alone in his works †."

The sacerdotal character was historical as well as holy, and in both respects, no doubt, much of its excellence was owing to the ecclesiastical obligation imposed upon priests to recite the canonical office. It was to be wished, indeed, as Mabillon said, "that the will of the ministers of Christ might spontaneously be directed to fulfil the offices of piety without requiring the stimulus of law; but such is the depravation of customs, and such the vanity of opinions, that the intervention of laws is necessary to recal good manners, lest they should ever perish, and to retain piety, lest the forgetfulness of God should at length possess all minds oppressed with the multitude of secular cares ‡." That the lessons of the second nocturns of the Roman breviary might be subjected to criticism was a fact well known. Pope Benedict XIV. says that although the historic facts as there related are of great authority, yet difficulties raised from them with modesty, and on solid foundations, may always be submitted to the judgment of the apostolic see, for all things inserted in the martyrology are not of unquestionable truth, as is clear from repeated corrections §. Granting even that some of the circumstances related in these fragments might be rather mythical than

* Hugo St. Victor De Ecclesiasticis Officiis, Lib. I. cap. 44.

† De Missa Tractat. Ascet. cap. II. 2.

‡ Mabillonii Disquisit. de cursu Gallicano, 6.

§ De canonizat. sanctorum, Lib. IV. cap. 17.

historical, still they showed what was the ancient opinions of the fact, and the moral lesson which they inculcated was salutary, often sublime, and if reason alone here is to be heard, surely the opinions of the minute philosophers of our day, who carp at such passages, can hardly be preferred to the judgment of the ancient Pythagoreans, who used to assent to all relations respecting God, and to make mention of such as seemed fabulous ; to use the words of their historians, *ως οὐδὲν ἀπιστοῦντες ὅτι ἀν εἰς τὸ θεῖον ἀνάγνωται* *. The breviary, in a philosophic and even literary point of view, perhaps the hardest of all books, was not merely the manual of saints, the very soul and essence of the Holy Scriptures ; it contained also inestimable treasures for the historian, for the poet, for the philosopher ; it was the history of men, and the history of Providence, bringing down to each successive age the wondrous theme of eternity begun for us in Genesis. What consolation besides must innumerable priests, at various times have derived, like Cardinal Pacca, when carried away captive from Rome, by marking the passages applicable to their personal condition, which occurred in the office of each day†. If men can be known by knowing the books they read, the clergy ought to have been venerable in the eyes of the just, solely on the ground of their daily recitation of the breviary. The admirable excellence of this discipline has often appeared to me in a striking manner, while travelling through France, when before arriving at some village church or lonely chapel, one sees a priest in the distance, walking solitary in the fields at even-tide, in the midst of an impious and deluded generation, meditating in his breviary the law of God, which converteth the heart ; chaunting to himself the songs of mercy and judgment, which recount the mysteries of the everlasting Gospel !

Let us now proceed to inquire what fruits of justice were associated in the ages of faith with the distribution and employment of the ecclesiastical revenues. In what light plurality of benefices was regarded by the clergy of the thirteenth century may be learned from the solemn disputation which took place before William of Paris, in the year 1238. Guiard, Bishop of Cambrai, declared, that for all the gold of Arabia, he would not retain two

* Jamblich de Pythagoric. Vita, cap. 28.

† Paccha Memorie Storiche, II. cap. I.

benefices a single night. William of Paris had admonished Philip, chancellor of the university, on his death-bed ; but he could not prevail on him to retract his opinion. Albert the Great records, that shortly after his death, as William was going to matins, a dark object interposed between him and the light, announced to the affrighted bishop the doom of the impenitent pluralist, who, though once wise and learned, confesses that he now knows nothing, being involved in the profound ignorance that reigns among the damned. The council of Agatha decreed, that to a priest who neglected to frequent his church, nothing should be given, excepting what was termed the stranger's allowance ; which was the sum that used to be paid to strange clerks, being less than what was due to those who served a church *. Unless for some just cause, canons could not be absent for more than three months, and during that time they did not receive the daily distributions, which were given only to those who were present in choir †. Sanson, Archbishop of Rheims, deprived the non-resident canons of the revenue of their prebends ‡. In the eighth century, the Irish Synod decreed that a priest should not be absent more than one day from the church ; if he staid away two days he was to fast for seven on bread and water ; if absent on a Sunday, he was to fast for twenty days on bread and water §. Nevertheless the intellectual interests of the individual were not sacrificed. In the year 1406, Thomas Crawlegh, prebendary of Lusk, had licence to absent himself from Ireland for two years, for the purpose of studying at Oxford, with liberty to receive the fruits and profits of his benefice ; and in the library of the chapter of Evreux might be read the brief of Pope Nicholas V., granting permission to Robert de Cibole, a man of great learning, dean of that cathedral, to reside in whatever place would be most favourable to the prosecution of his studies ||. The clergy, in general, were allowed by the bishop, in proportion to their labours and circumstances. If the cathedral were rich, it sent funds to repair indigent parish churches ;

* Thomassinus de Vet. et nova Eccles. Discip. III. Lib. II. c. 15.

† Joan. Devoti Instit. can. Lib. I. tit. 3.

‡ Hist. de Rheims, II.

§ Capit. Canonum Hiber. XXV. apud Dacher. Spicileg. IX.

|| Hist. d'Evreux.

if poor, and some parish churches rich, they were to contribute to its support *. Possidius says, that St. Augustin made no will, as being himself one of the poor of Christ, who had not wherewithal to make one ; for whatever he possessed was common to his clergy †. The house of the priest was the house of the bishop, and the house of God. St. Augustin desired that it might not be called the priest's house, “*Nemo amplius dicat, in domum presbyteri.* Ecce ubi est domus presbyteri ; ubi est domus mea, ibi est domus presbyteri ; alibi non habet domum nisi ubicunque habet Deum.” “I make you my heir,” says Salyrus on his death-bed to his brother, St. Ambrose, “for you had before constituted me yours, but I am to depart before you.” He left no written testament, but he asked St. Ambrose to give what should seem just to the poor. St. Ambrose accordingly gave the whole : “for this” said he, “is the highest justice.” Paulinus mentions that St. Ambrose left no will, having already disposed of every thing to the church, and to the poor ‡. Constantius the priest gives a similar reason to account for the blessed bishop Germain having left no will. Neither did Paulinus nor St. Hilary, bishop of Arles, leave any will, for they had reserved nothing to themselves. The third council of Carthage, and the council of Antioch made decrees against bishops who should accumulate wealth from the church, so as to leave heirs, though they might dispose of what had come to them from other sources. It was the custom of the eastern bishops to renounce all property on their consecration, and priests on their ordination were enjoined to do the same by the third council of Carthage. By the laws of Justinian bishops were not allowed to leave by testament any wealth which had been derived from the church. St. John, the almoner patriarch of Alexandria, had found an incredible sum of gold money in the church treasury, yet when he came to die, he could say, “I thank thee, O God, for having heard my misery, when I besought thy goodness that nothing might be found in my possession when I came to die, unless one penny.” St. Remi left the greatest part of what he possessed to the church, but named his two nephews as his heirs ; he

* Thomassinus III. 11. 15.

† In Vita, cap. 31.

‡ Paulinus in ejus Vita, c. 19.

did not even forget twelve poor people who used to beg before the church doors, and forty widows. Sonnatius, archbishop of Rheims, followed these primitive examples, as did also Hadoinus, bishop in the year 642, and Didierius in 648. The blessed Perpetuus, archbishop of Tours, left a will which began thus : “ I Perpetuus, a sinner, priest of the church of Tours, am unwilling to depart without a testament, lest the poor should be defrauded of those things which the supernal grace had liberally and lovingly conferred upon me unworthy, and lest the goods of the priest should pass elsewhere besides to the church.” When the bishop of Tarragonna died intestate, the priests and deacons met, and made an inventory of every thing, even to the least article of furniture, when the whole were disposed of as he would have wished it, according to the canons.

So little avaricious was Charlemagne, that he made a decree, that if any bishop or priest died intestate, his goods were all to go to the Church which he served. King John of England, on the contrary, claimed for himself, on these occasions. Herardus, archbishop of Tours, made a rule in his synodical constitutions, “ that whatever was acquired in sacred orders, should be left to the respective churches.” Aldricus, a bishop in the reign of Louis le Debonnaire, left a will bequeathing all his goods to the churches, monasteries, clerks, to the poor, and to his servants *. This was always the motive assigned by bishops for making a will, lest the Church and the poor should be defrauded. The blessed Udalricus, before his death, gave even the furniture of his episcopal palace to the poor: and the blessed Gebbard, bishop of Constance, being of a noble and rich family, prevailed upon his brethren to give him a portion, that he might apply to the use of the poor, what would be otherwise spent in the luxury and pomps of the world. The blessed Burchard, bishop of Worms, left in his house, on his death, the sacred vessels of the Church, and three denarii; for every thing had been given to the poor †. When the blessed Hugo, bishop of Lincoln, was near death, he was admonished to make a will, according to custom; he replied, “ I am weary of this custom, every where introduced into the Church; I neither had nor have any thing which is not of the Church, which I was commissioned

* Baluz. Misc. tom. III. p. 83.

† Baron. an. 1026.

to govern. Nevertheless, lest the fisc should carry it off, let all that I seem to possess, be given to the poor *." St. Bernard relates that Atto, bishop of Troyes, in his sickness, gave all that he had to the poor, and confirmed it when he was not in danger of death. John of Salisbury gives the Testament of Theobald, archbishop of Canterbury, and his letter to the king, in which last he says, that the furniture which he retains till his death, will be of no use to any one but to the poor, as he has pronounced the most dire curse on all who would deprive them of inheriting it. He left all to the poor; and when the blessed Stephen, bishop of Dieu in 1213, was pressed to make a will, he replied, "It is needless, since every thing belongs to my spouse, which I undertook to govern †." It was not till the sixteenth century, that the new custom prevailed of relations becoming the heirs of those who held ecclesiastical benefices. The blessed Anno, archbishop of Cologne, had reserved nothing for himself, but his ring and his sacred furniture. His words were these : "Why doth the estimation of men celebrate me, as one of the great and rich? Lo, besides the utensils of my chapel, my pontificals, and this ring, I know not whether I possess even one denarium. For neither do I collect the treasures of insatiable avarice in my cloisters, which could attract the greedy, having carefully provided that I should not leave so much as one farthing on my death for their talons ‡."

Of the liberality and goodness with which the episcopal domains were governed, a remarkable evidence incidentally occurs in the canons of the Council of Orleans, held in the year 511, which decrees, "that if through humanity, a bishop should lend Church lands to be cultivated, no length of time should give rise to any prescription."

In the synodical constitutions of Stephen, bishop of Paris, in 1503, the clergy were forbidden to leave the goods of the Church by will to other persons, or places, than to their churches. He could not declare their wills invalid, but he reminded them of their canonical duty. William Arvernus, bishop of Paris, hearing that on the death of an intestate canon, 3000 marks of silver devolved to him, shuddered at this treasure of the mam-

* Surius Novem. 17. cap. 28.

† Rainald. an. 1213.

‡ Surius die 4 Decemb. cap. 31.

mon of iniquity, and ordered it all to be expended on the poor. Striking his hands together, he replied, “ Far be it from me, but, alas ! the wretched man ! let his money perish with him.” St. Charles Borromeo left all that he possessed to the hospital, to the clergy, and to the poor of Milan *.

William of Malmesbury says, that Rudulph, archbishop of Canterbury, and successor of St. Anselm, acquired nothing by the amplitude of his fortunes, but the power of conferring more benefits upon whom he would †. St. Augustin would not ordain any man who did not relinquish all his private possessions, and resolve to live from thenceforth upon what the Church would allow him, in common with the rest of her clergy. This did Paulinus, this did St. Cyprian, who abandoned great wealth, though nevertheless he had a country house at the time of his martyrdom ; this did St. Ambrose, this did Felix, this did Nepotianus, as testified by St. Jerome ; this did St. Martin, St. Gregory Nazianzen, St. Chrysostom, St. Basil, Theodore, Epiphanius, Porphyrius of Gaza, and innumerable others. The alms of the laity, enriched the Church ‡, but the clergy knew at the same time that the property of the Church was nothing else but the vows of the faithful, the price of sins, and the patrimony of the poor.

Julianus Pomerius observes, that this discipline is not hard when every one adopts it ; that what seems difficult to those who do not practise it, becomes easy to those who observe it ; as soon as it becomes a custom, it disturbs no one §. This discipline was generally observed through the sixth, seventh, and eighth centuries ; though the obligation does not seem to have continued, since clerks might retain their patrimony, while it was expected that they would reserve for themselves only what was necessary to support them in common with others. Until the tenth century, the life of the clergy in community, continued to be a great obstacle to corruption and avarice. The Roman council in 1059, under Pope Ni-

* Thomassinus de vet. et nova Discip. III. Lib. II. cap. 38
—cap. 50.

† De Gestis Pontiff. Anglorum, Lib. I.

‡ Id. III. Lib. III. cap. 3.

§ De Vita contemp. Lib. II. c. 10.

cholas II. invited all the clergy to this society of common or apostolic life *. At this a hundred and thirteen bishops assisted ; the decrees were sent into France, and during the succeeding ages, till the sixteenth century, numerous communities of clergy were formed with this object. Cardinal Bellarmine shows that all theologians taught that clerks might only reserve for themselves what was necessary for a decent subsistence ; and that what was superfluity was to be given to the poor †. Hence, say the ancient writers, we should not wonder, or be offended at the riches of the Church. A priest, to whom the care of dispensation is committed, not only without cupidity, but also with the praise of piety, receives from the people things to be distributed, and faithfully dispenses what he receives ; he leaves all his own either to his relations, or to the poor, or to the Church, and through the love of poverty, makes himself of the number of the poor, so that from the funds which he ministers to the poor, he also himself as voluntarily poor, may live ‡.

Manual labour was prescribed not alone to many of the religious orders, of which St. Augustine saw whole congregations of men and women at Rome, and Milan, thus employed. Paulinus, bishop of Nola, cultivated a garden ; Felix, priest and martyr, was a tiller of the ground. St. Hilary, archbishop of Arles, with his clerks, worked with their hands. The clergy were exhorted to labour in the apostolic constitutions. The blessed Spiridion, bishop of Cyprus, tended a flock of sheep. Sozomen says, that the holy Bishop Zeno, when past his one hundredth year, never ceased labouring with his hands, though he held the keys of the richest Church. Fulgentius advised all his clergy to have a garden, that they might cultivate it with their own hand ; and Gregory of Tours says, that Nicetius, bishop of Lyons, continued to work in his father's house, that he might experience bodily labour. Under Charlemagne and the successors of his race, the clergy were exhorted to labour by the councils ; and the rules of Chrodegangus prescribed occasion-

* Can. 4.

† De clericis, Lib. I. c. 27.

‡ Julianus Pomerius de Vita contemp. Lib. II. cap. 11. vide etiam Thomass. III. Lib. III. cap. 1—cap. 8.

ally, even the most servile offices to the clergy *. Manual labour was prescribed and practised by Bishop Theodulph, by Hincmar, by Actardus, bishop of Nantes, by Adalbert, bishop of Prague, by St. Dunstan, archbishop of Canterbury, by Bernard, bishop of Hildesheim. Similarly after the tenth century, Petrus of Damian, archbishop of Mainz, being cast into prison by his relation, the emperor Otho, passed his time in writing out the Psalter in letters of gold, and took such pleasure in that work, that when he obtained liberty to go out, he refused to leave the prison till he had finished it. In the year 1207, Julianus, a holy bishop, having given every thing to the poor, supported himself and a companion, by making baskets of rushes. Innumerable priests in the thirteenth century, worked with their hands voluntarily. The blessed Thomas, archbishop of Canterbury, had often been employed in the fields, in rustic labour, with his brethren of the Cistercian order †.

Sophronius relates, that a certain bishop abandoned his see, and went in disguise to Jerusalem, where he offered himself to serve the builders. At this time, Ephremius, a pious and charitable man, was count of the east; and under him men were repairing the public edifices after an earthquake. His attention was so much excited by the assiduity and good conduct of this strange labourer, that at length he began to question him respecting his origin. It was not till after much importunity, and upon condition of observing inviolable secrecy, that he extorted the secret from the humble workman, who confessed that he was a bishop, who for God had come to an unknown place to support himself with the labour of his hands. Ephremius gave glory to God, and exclaimed how many hidden servants hath God, known only to himself ‡.

Commerce and trade were strictly forbidden to the clergy in the first five centuries. The councils of Carthage were express. St. Ambrose showed the necessity of this law, to preserve that tranquillity of mind which is essential to the sacerdotal character. For that is tranquillity of mind and temperance, which is neither affected by the

* Can. 13, 14.

† Thomass. III. Lib. III. cap. 9—cap. 16.

‡ Pratum Spirituale, cap. 36.

study of gain, nor harassed by the fear of indigence. The same lesson was inculcated by St. Augustine *, St. Jerome †, and by Epiphanius, in his exposition of the Catholic faith. Pope Leo enforced it with powerful reasons ‡; and the council of Chalcedon prohibited the clergy from involving themselves in any manner in secular affairs. The councils of France during the sixth, seventh, and eighth centuries, enforced the same discipline, as did also those of Spain. The ships of churches did not excite even a suspicion of trade. In the council of Mayence, under Charlemagne, the prohibition is repeated; so also in that of London, in 1175, under pain of anathema §. To the same effect was the sentence of the council of Avignon in 1279, that of Cologne in 1536, and that of Milan, under St. Charles ||.

The clergy were prohibited from conducting the affairs of lay nobles, by a council under Urban II. in 1089, and by that of London in 1102.

St. Cyprian would not permit mass to be said for Victor after his death, because, contrary to the canons, he had nominated as guardian Faustinus, who was a priest; and he adds this reason to the authority of his predecessors, “that he did not deserve to be named at the altar of God in the prayers of the priests who had wished to withdraw priests from the altar;” priests were not permitted to exercise the office of judge, or of any member of the secular courts, by the same council of London, and by that of Rheims in 1131, which extended the prohibition to the practice of medicine. These prohibitions as to law and medicine, were enforced by the second and fourth councils of Lateran, and of Tours, in 1163.

However, it is clear, that the clergy were often called to conduct the councils of kings and princes. William of Malmesbury says, “that under Ethelwulph, king of England, the greatest destruction would have fallen upon the kingdom and the Church, had not Swithin and Alstan, bishops of Worcester and Sherburn, come to the aid of the state, in the management of the finances, and of the war. Edmund, king of England, called St. Dunstan

* De opere Monac. c. 15. de verbis dom. in Mart. Ser. XIX.

† Epist. ad Nepotian. ‡ In Decret. cap. 23. Epist. 92.

§ Can. 10.

|| Thomassin. III. Lib. III. cap. 17—cap. 21.

to his councils, and the blessed Herebert, archbishop of Cologne, accompanied Otho III. into Italy, to conduct the affairs of his kingdom. It is remarkable to read the reasons assigned by Pope Gregory IX. for prohibiting clerks from accepting civil offices; “Because it is the sacerdotal office to hurt no one, but to wish to do good to all.”

Many holy men refused ecclesiastical dignities, from an unwillingness to be entangled in temporal affairs. St. Domnole, beloved of Clotaire, was to be raised to the see of Avignon, but he refused, beseeching the king that he would not permit his simplicity to be fatigued amidst sophistical senators, and philosophic judges *.

It is certain, however, that bishops and abbots sat in all the ancient parliaments. History records with honour, the names of several who presided over the councils of kings, such as the abbot Suger, whom St. Bernard would never have praised, if his conduct had been contrary to holy discipline; and yet he says of him, in a letter to Pope Eugene III. “I have known the man, and seen him faithful and prudent in temporals, fervent and humble in spirituels, and what is most difficult, conducting himself in both without reproach. With Cæsar, he is as one of the Roman court; with God, as if one of the court of heaven.”

Tilpin, archbishop of Rheims, deserved by his great ability, the confidence reposed in him by Charlemagne, who always kept him at his side, that he might consult him on every occasion. He made him follow his expedition into Spain. This was he that was so famous in old romance, under the name of Turpin. The real prelate had all the qualities of a great bishop; zeal, learning, prudence, lofty views, and the love of justice. It was Tilpin who placed monks in the cathedral, and who began the construction of the Church, and library, which were finished by Hincmar †.

The name of Peter Abeillard, abbot of St. Gildas, is at the bottom of the most important charters of the dukes of Brittany, which shows that his merit and abilities gave him an eminent post in the state ‡.

In the year 1190, Philip Augustus, making an expedi-

* Greg. Turon. 1. VI. c. 9

† Anquetil, Hist. de Rheims, Liv. 1. 87.

‡ Lobineau Hist. de Bret. tom. II. 252.

tion beyond sea, left the regency of the kingdom in the hands of the queen, and of William, archbishop of Rheims. At the court of St. Louis, and of Philip III. his son, no one was so distinguished in the administration, as Matthew, abbot of St. Denis ; and Charles VII. in 1458, called to his council the Bishop of Paris. Lancfranc, archbishop of Canterbury, was made regent of England, in 1099 * : and William Rufus committed the administration of the kingdom to William, bishop of Durham †. Alexander III. sent very angry letters to Richard, archbishop of Canterbury, because the bishops of Winchester, Ely, and Norwich, were suffered to remain so long at court, to the neglect of their churches ; and the archbishop returned answer, by the pen of Peter of Blois, that these were good men ; that it was not a novelty for bishops to assist at the councils of kings ; for as they surpass others in virtue and wisdom, so are they considered more expeditious and efficient in the administration of the republic ‡. When Richard I. assumed the reins of government, he committed the administration of the whole kingdom to William, bishop of Ely ; and on his return from Palestine, he gave the same authority to Hubert, archbishop of Canterbury ; and in the reign of Henry II. the bishops of Winchester, Ely, and Norwich, had been chief justices over all other judges, and had distinguished themselves by their wisdom and moderation ; for though they acted against the canons in accepting office, the king's command, and perhaps the necessity of the times, obliged them to do it. Roger, bishop of Salisbury, would not accept of this office, till he yielded through holy obedience to St. Anselm, archbishop of Canterbury. Under Edward III. almost all the great officers of the palace and kingdom were clerks, the chancellor, the treasurer, the keeper of the little seal, ten masters of chancery, and innumerable others ; but through the remonstrance of pope Urban V., the laity began to be more employed in the government. Gregory IX. consented that Henry III. might retain bishops in his councils. “ You assert that through the pious devotion of your ancestors, the custom was introduced, that the kings of England should always

* Matt. Paris, cap. XV.

† Williel. Malmesbur. Lib. IV. p. 120.

‡ Baron. an. 1176.

have some bishops counsellors of their kingdom. We, therefore, believing in your pious intention, and hoping to provide for the utility both of your kingdom, and of the church, grant faculties to the bishops whom you have summoned for this purpose, that they may assist you in council as utility and virtue may require *.” The king gave the office of justice to abbots, which went beyond the pope’s intention, so that the bishop of Lincoln wrote to the archbishop of Canterbury, exciting him to prevent such impiety; but the king kept to his point, and the archbishop replied that there was no hope of redress till the next council, though the bishop of Lincoln continued to produce canons and testimonies of every kind against the practice. If we pass into Germany, we shall find the instances still more numerous. Gebehard, bishop of Eichstad, was chief minister to Henry II., and the blessed Anno, archbishop of Cologne, had governed during his minority; and it was not till after his departure that Henry gave way to all the intemperance of youth. Anno, on accepting the office, had procured a decree that always it should be the bishop in whose diocese the king might be remaining, who was to take care that the republic came to no injury, and who was to answer and decide the causes brought to the king. This was in 1062. The education of the king, and the ordination of all public affairs, were in the hands of the archbishop of Mainz and Cologne, occasionally joined with the archbishop of Bremen. Richard I. ascribes the success of his proceedings in Germany to Adalbert, archbishop of Salzburg, “We return multiplied thanks to your paternity,” he says in a letter to him, “for having studied so efficaciously to further the deliverance of our pledges, whom the Duke of Austria held; for whatever was done to our advantage in that article we know was done by your diligence, but what you did over and above shall be extolled for ever, and the fame of your goodness shall never perish; for you did what you ought to do, since second after the lord pope you hold the place of blessed Peter†.” John of Salisbury says, that in his time the king of Denmark, dismissing the archbishop, resolved to govern by himself; but that he soon called him back again, and honoured

* Rainald. Ann. 1231. n. 51.

† Germania Sacra, tom. II. 956.

him as a father*. John Magnus records in his history of the Goths, that king Eric called to his councils Henry, archbishop of Upsal, by whose advice and pious exhortations the devout king ordered the course of his life. Throughout the whole of the north of Germany, the ministers of the altar were made ministers of the royal court, as pope Paschal II. said †. Yet secular dignities did not involve them in secular vices. The emperor Otho I., being called away to the eastern parts of the empire, committed the west to the government of the archbishop of Cologne. In Spain the result is found similar. Memorable is the example related by Roderic, archbishop of Toledo, speaking of king Veremundus. He was of a noble and truly royal mind, and adorned with all kingly virtues, yet he abdicated the crown in the midst of his glory; for he recollects, and repeatedly considered, that he had been formerly initiated in the office of deacon, and he saw that the duties of that sacred dignity could hardly be united with a crown. He gave up his kingdom to Akonzo, his relation, in whose palace he lived many years, observing the law of celibacy. This was before the year 800. Casimir being a deacon, and a monk of Cluny, when restored to the crown of Poland, might have had a dispensation from the pope; but the urgent distresses of his unhappy country prescribed a different conduct from that of Veremundus. Cardinal Ximines, of the Franciscan order, and archbishop of Toledo, was for a long time ruler of the kingdom; and it appears that formerly the archbishops of Toledo, by their office, were always the chief ministers of the king. As Thomassinus says, “it was not ambition, but the religion of kings, the piety and faith of prelates, and the ardour and contention of both to defend and restore the dignity of the church and kingdom, which laid the foundation of the wondrous authority of this see.” The office of prebendary or chancellor, was almost exclusively reserved for bishops and abbots, in France, England, Spain, Portugal, and Germany during all these ages. Yet when St. Thomas of Canterbury was elected, he sent back the great seals to the king, renouncing the office of chancellor, lest he should be straitened by bonds of the court; at which the king was angry in heart, for in fact, while

* Baron. an. 1167.

† Epist. 22.

chancellor, he had repressed the audacity of the king's flatterers, who like hawks conspired to prey upon the goods of the church, as Matthew of Paris says*. The fact of this influence of the clergy in the councils of kings, instead of sanctioning the imputations of the modern sophists, is, on the contrary, only a fresh evidence of the extraordinary thirst and fulfilment of justice, which characterized the middle ages. Surely it was well for a people when a counsellor stood near the throne, to whom a just monarch could say,

—“ Speak, my lord,
And we will hear, note, and believe in heart
That what you speak is in your conscience washed
As pure as sin in baptism.”

Well was it for a people when a holy churchman could furnish proof of the charm of justice, and the empire which it exercises over men ; so that of him history could record as it testified of Suger, that the king respected him as if he had been his father, and feared him as if he had been his master. The old books of the Anglo Saxons are full of letters from kings addressed to holy men, written in a style of filial respect, and great humility. Thus Ælbwald, king of the East Saxons, says, in his letter to St. Boniface, “ We wish you to know with what gratitude we heard that our littleness was commended to your holy prayers, and that your benignity had offered the solemn masses and prayers to God in our behalf. We shall endeavour to fulfil with a devout mind what you desire respecting the monasteries of our kingdom. That as the predestination of God hath placed you a pastor over the people, so we wish that you should feel our protection as your patron †.” Hear what say the laws of the Visigoths, “ The priests of God, to whom for remedy of the oppressed and the poor, the care is divinely committed, are, with paternal solicitude, to admonish the judges who should oppress the people, that they may amend and reverse the things wrongfully judged ; and if such judges should bear false sentence, then the bishop in whose territory it occurs having convened the judges, shall, in council with priests, or other fit men, terminate the affair according to justice : but if the judge

* Thomassinus, Pars III. Lib. III. cap. 22. 25.

† S. Bonif. Epist. LXXVI.

should continue obstinate, then it will be lawful for the bishop to interpose in behalf of the oppressed, till the case is submitted to our serenity *.” In like manner, the council of Arles, in the year 813, reminded the bishops that they were to protect the poor from all oppression, and that they must address themselves to the king to make it cease. In latter times, I grant it would seem as if places of high official power were naturally and properly reserved for unprincipled libertines; but when rulers were willing to be guided by holy men of learning and wisdom, why should philosophers have refused to come to their assistance? Many of the Pythagoreans were great politicians, who ruled Italic cities, and founded free states †. Many Christian pontiffs were the same; no doubt the clergy were masters, because virtue must always be supreme. “Under every law” as Pindar, who was himself a Pythagorean, says, “a man of upright tongue, εὐθύγλωσσος ἀνὴρ, must excel ‡.” Diogenes being about to be sold by some robbers who had taken him prisoner, put himself up to sale, crying out “Who wants to buy a master?” At least if the clergy did receive a government which was thrust upon them, surely, as the Athenians once said of themselves, “they did nothing wonderful, οὐδὲ ἀπὸ τοῦ ἀνθρωπείου τρόπου; and therefore men of natural views have no right to condemn them §.” And besides, now that we have seen what was the ideal of all power and authority in the ages of faith, why might not a holy priest reply, in the words of Tele-machus, to those who would tax him with ambitious thoughts, “I should have no objection to possess from God what you ridicule.”

ἢ φὺς τοῦτο κάκιστον ἐν ἀνθρώποισι τετύχθαι;
οὐ μὲν γάρ τι κακὸν βασιλευέμεν ||.

What men would a lover of justice wish to see enthroned upon the vatican in preference to a Leo or a Gregory? Here the speculation has been verified by the fact; for at Rome, where the desire of Plato has been more than realized, the clergy in possession of that power are distinguished by the utmost modesty, the utmost grace, the

* Legis Wisigothorum, Lib. II. 30.

† Jamblich. Pythagoric. Vit. cap. 27.

§ Thucyd. Lib. I. c. 76.

‡ Pyth. Od. II.

|| Od. I. 390.

greatest tenderness for the poor, the greatest gentleness and condescension for all men; and if it were not that mercy and charity seem to be carried sometimes almost to excess by the utmost justice. Now, as Glaucus says of Socrates, when the latter had delivered his famous sentence, that philosophy should be united with political power, and should govern, "I am aware that I have uttered a word which will cause a multitude of men, and such as are not altogether to be despised, to rush upon me, casting off their cloaks, and stripping their arms, and each taking up whatever instrument is near, in order to attack me in a body, as if to perform instantly some famous exploit *." Nevertheless I can find nothing in history or in philosophy, to awaken a suspicion that the word is an error. One has accused the obstinacy of the two parties of Henry IV. and Gregory VII., "without remarking," says Michelet, "that it was not a struggle of men. The men tried to approach each other, and never could. Reconciliation was impossible; nothing can reconcile spirit and matter, flesh and spirit †." The pontiff was for eternal justice, and the law of God. We need not ask for what cause the other contended.

Churchmen did not seek office or cling to it from ambition. In 1149 the abbot Suger, while regent of France, wrote as follows to the king, pressing his return : "The disturbers of the public repose are again active, while you, who are bound to defend your subjects, remain like a captive in a foreign land. Seigneur, what can occupy your thoughts, to leave thus at the mercy of wolves the sheep confided to you? No, you are not permitted to remain absent any longer. We implore, therefore, your highness, we exhort your piety, we demand of the goodness of your heart, we conjure you by the faith which reciprocally binds the prince and the subjects, to protract your stay in Syria no longer than the festival of Easter, lest a longer delay should render you guilty in the eyes of the Lord, of breaking the oath which you took on receiving the crown. You have reason, I think, to be satisfied with our conduct. We have placed in the hands of the knight templars the money which you had resolved to send us. Besides this, we have repaid the Count de Vermandois the sum which he had lent us for your ser-

* De Repub. Lib. V.

† Hist. de France, II. 177.

vice. Your lands and your men enjoy at present a happy peace. You will find your houses and your palace in good condition, by means of the repairs which we have conducted. But you see me now in the decline of life, and I dare say that the occupations in which I engaged for the love of God, and through attachment to your person, have greatly accelerated my old age." Lewis did, accordingly, return, and resume the reins of government, though his absence was more beneficial under Suger, than his presence without him. From that time Suger retired almost completely within the walls of his abbey of Saint Denis.

The correspondence of Alcuin with Charlemagne presents a similar example. In one letter, he restrains the zeal of the emperor respecting the payment of tithes*. In another, he recommends him to treat the Huns, who are his prisoners with indulgence, and to show clemency to his enemies†. In another, he entreats him to beware of the dangers of the expedition of Beneventum. "Perhaps," he observes, "some one will say, Why does he meddle with what is foreign to him? Let such a person know that nothing which concerns your prosperity is foreign to me; for I declare that it is dearer to me than the health of my body, or the duration of my life. You are the happiness of the kingdom, the safety of the people, the honour of the churches, the protector of all the faithful of Christ: it is under the shadow of your power, and under the shelter of your piety, that the divine grace has granted to us the practice of a religious life, and to serve Jesus Christ in peace and quietness: it is, then, just and necessary, that with an attentive mind and a devoted heart, we should be occupied with your fortune and with your health; and that we should invoke God for this end, thou excellent king and worthy of all honour ‡." In another letter to an archbishop, in the year 796, we find him retired from court and living in his monastery of Tours. "Let your fraternity know that I your son desire ardently to lay down the burden of the affairs of the world, that I may serve God alone. Every man has need to prepare himself with vigilance, in order to meet God; much more an old man, worn down with years and infirmities §." Charlemagne desired to retain him at court,

* Epist. 28.

† Id. 32.

‡ Id. 105.

§ Id. 168.

and to take him with him to Rome. "It is a shame," he writes to him, "to prefer the smoky roofs of the people of Tours to the golden palaces of the Romans;" but Alcuin was firm. "I could not endure the fatigues of the journey. I implore you to let me finish my career near St. Martin: all the energy, all the dignity of my body is vanished, and vanishes day by day. I shall never recover it in this world. I had hoped in these last days to see once more the face of your beatitude, but the progress of my infirmities obliges me to renounce that hope. I conjure, therefore, your goodness, let not that mind so holy, that will so beneficent, which are in you, be irritated at my weakness: permit, with pious compassion, that a fatigued man take repose, that he pray for you, and that he prepare himself in confession and tears to appear before the Eternal Judge *."

Pascasius Radbert describes Wala, the abbot of Corby, as a consummate statesman. "In the senate his genius excelled that of all others, so that if he were asked concerning any of the affairs in hand, immediately without delay, as if from a fountain, flowed the wisest counsel that could be found or given †." Nevertheless, he had to defend him from the charge of those who said that he occupied himself too much with affairs of state. "It is the duty," he observes, "of a good man, of one like Wala, from his birth and connexions, endued with great authority in the state, to consult for the welfare of his country and of his fellow citizens. But why, you ask, did the holy and mortified Wala return to take part in the horrors of worldly society, when the empire was falling to pieces? Because he saw the evils, and wished to obviate them, to resist for the faith of the kingdom and of the king, for the love of his country and of his people, for the religion of the churches, and the salvation of his fellow citizens, which were all dearer to him than his own life ‡."

If from the object we pass to investigate the effects of this influence, the assertions of the sophists of the last century will all be found totally erroneous. There are not wanting writers of research at present, who do not

* CVI. Epist.

† Vita ejus apud Mabill. Acta S. Ordinis Benedict. Sæcul. IV. pars I.

‡ Id. Lib. II.

need to be told this. Witness what is said by a modern historian of France, speaking of the legislative assembly in Gaul, in the year 614. "Many articles of a remarkable liberality," says Michelet, "indicate the ecclesiastical hand *." Who were the men that used to interpose between rulers and their subjects, to save the innocent from oppression, and to stem the violence of arbitrary power? Were not they members of the clergy of whom the church sings, "Isti sunt triumphatores et amici Dei qui, contemnentes jussa principum, meruerunt præmia æterna?"

The splendour attached to the episcopal dignity in the middle ages, has given offence to some writers; but Petrus Alliacensis argued wisely, while reproving certain monks who condemned the grandeur which holy bishops had often observed. "These magnificent provisions, whether in houses or vestments, or other exterior ornaments, which they style pomps, were introduced from the time of blessed Pope Sylvester, both for sovereign pontiffs, and for other bishops, and they were solely designed for extolling the glory of Christ and of his church; to observe which exteriorly with the moderation of temperance, and interiorly without losing humility is not vanity or vice, but virtue and merit. So that those are vehemently to be censured who, under pretence of humility, proudly inveigh against this custom, and blame on account of its observance the episcopal state†."

Willegisus, archbishop of Mayence, in the tenth century, the friend of kings and princes, was indeed a man of almost royal magnificence, but what prelate ever evinced a more apostolic spirit, or was more profound in the science of the Scriptures? This was he who having been the son of a wheelwright, caused to be painted on the wall of his bed-chamber, into which no one was allowed to enter but his chaplain, a cart-wheel, over which was written, "Willegise, memento quid modo sis: quid antea fueris, et quid in brevi necessario futurus sis," which artifice of humility was not known till his death, when it seemed so admirable to the Emperor Henry, that he ordered that a wheel should in future be the emblem of the city of Mayence, which it retains on its shield to this day †.

* Michelet, Hist. de France, I. 249.

† Rainald. an. 1294.

‡ Annal. Hirsaugiens.

We now come to the frugality and moderation of the clergy in their character of dispensers. St. Jerome wished that Nepotianus might have a table at which the poor and strangers and Christ might be occasional guests. He shows how shameful it would be, if he were to entertain with magnificence the civil magistrates. A secular judge will respect more a continent than a rich cleric, and will more venerate your sanctity than your riches.

By the statutes of the synod of Nantes, no priest was allowed to have more than two dishes at table, excepting when he received the Duke of Brittany and his officers.

It was the custom of the Teutonic knights, that two of them should eat out of one dish, as a mark of poverty and humility. St. Ambrose said, “I think it is the part of ecclesiastics to decline the banquets of strangers, that they may show hospitality to travellers, and that from that caution there may be no ground of offence given; for the convivial meetings of strangers have occupations belonging to them, and they nourish the desire of feasting. Frequently, too, fables from the world creep in. You cannot close your ears; to prohibit them is thought pride. Cups also creep in contrary to the will.” Possidius describes the great simplicity of St. Augustin’s life. Dining in common with his clergy, the number of cups was defined for every one; his vessels were of wood or baked earth; his dress, neither splendid nor abject. Hear how he speaks of it himself to the people. “I wish that your sanctity would offer such things as I can decently use. For example, I am offered precious linen. Perchance this might become a bishop, though it doth not become Augustin, that is a man who is a sinner, born of poor parents. Men would soon say that I had found precious vestments, which I could never have had either in my father’s house or in my secular profession. It would not become me. I ought to have such as I might give to my brother, if he should be in want. I wish to receive such as a priest, such as a deacon or subdeacon can decently possess; for I receive all things in common. If any one should give me better I sell it, that since it cannot be a common vest, the price of the vest may be common. I sell and give to the poor. If it delight him that I should have one, let him give me such as I may wear without blushing; for I confess to you, that I blush to wear precious

clothes, because it doth not become this profession, this admonition, these limbs, these white hairs*.”

The fathers of the fourth council of Carthage, decreed, “That the bishop should have his ‘hospitiolum’ not far from the church; that the bishop should have vile furniture, and keep a poor table, and that he should seek the authority of his dignity by faith and the merits of his life†.” Severus Sulpicius, in his life of the blessed Martin, gives an example of this episcopal life, yet when he entertained guests, he had water for their hands and he washed their feet. Thus he received Sulpicius himself, who says “Nor did we attempt to contradict him in this, for I felt so oppressed by his authority, that it would have seemed a crime not to acquiesce.” Such was also the life of Paulinus, who from a state of great riches, embraced voluntary poverty, and became most rich in sanctity‡. He sent Severus a present of a wooden dish, and begged in return the gift of an earthen one, saying, “We love fragile vessels, because we know that it is in such we have committed to us the treasure of the Lord.” He used to joke about his cook, who could dress vegetables so well that a Roman senator would not disdain them. Faustus, abbot of Lerins, afterwards a bishop, and Lupus, the mirror of French bishops, both retained monastic simplicity in their episcopal houses, as did also the blessed Epiphanius and the holy bishop Germain, who even used to sleep upon a bed of ashes§. St. Hilary, archbishop of Arles, always travelled on foot. Constantine was greatly struck at the humble appearance of the bishops; he supplied them with public conveyances to come to the councils of Nice and Arles. St. Athanasius, recalled from exile, made his triumphal entry into Alexandria mounted upon a poor colt. Generally, in the middle ages, bishops travelled as we still can witness in Italy, mounted on a pacific mule, with a few of their clergy by their side, and others walking before. Gregory Nazianzen describes the simplicity of St. Basil’s life. “He had but one tunic, one cloak, his bed was upon the ground, his food bread and salt, and his drink the fountain water||.” Gregory

* De diversis Serm. 50.

† Can. XIV. XV. Ferr. cap. 71.

‡ S. August. de Civitate Dei, XIX. 20.

§ Surius die 5 Jul.

|| Orat. XX.

blames certain false imitators, who would have his dress, and bed, and food, but not his spirit and works; for his manner of life was not studied out of affectation, but perfectly simple and unpremeditated.

Gregory Nyssen gives a similar portrait in his life of Gregory Thaumaturgus, who resolved that there should not be found in his possession on his death wherewithal to bury his body; he would hasten on his journeys of charity mounted on a mule. Yet Gregory Nyssen did not disdain a chariot; for these men were equally humble in whatever manner they were carried. St. Chrysostom fled from the luxury of the age, and would therefore eat alone, that he might not furnish a pretence for employing the goods of the church in good living. Palladius the bishop, gives a detailed description of St. Chrysostom's frugal life, yet St. Chrysostom inveighed against certain of the laity, who condemned many of the clergy on the ground of their living well; saying that the priests of the law were far more liberally entertained; and that at all events, those who gave nothing to the clergy, ought not to reprove them for having too much*; and he added to those laymen who condemned the clergy, "When St. Paul said, 'having food and raiment let us therewith be content;' did he speak only to masters? By no means; but to all men. But you say, he takes a bath as I do, he eats, he drinks, he is clothed, he has the care of a house, why should he be a prelate before me? What, had not the apostles freedmen who served them? and when they were on a journey, did not noble men and women entertain them who would have given their lives for them? And if a priest takes care of his body, he is not to be blamed, for if he were to be confined to his bed by sickness, how could he then visit the churches?" Theodoret records the lives of many other holy bishops, who still retained all the frugality of monastic manners. Such were James of Nisibe, and Aphthonius; and Cassian gives a similar account of Archebius. Such were all these holy bishops, hating and despising what the world loved, and loving what the world scorned and abhorred.

St. Gregory the Great said, that he did not object to occasional feasts of charity, provided "that the life of no absent persons were there criticised, that no one were re-

* In Epist. ad Phil. Hom. IX.

prehended or ridiculed, and that not the vain fables of secular affairs, but words of sacred lessons should be heard at them, when superfluities were not given to the body, but only its weakness refreshed, that it may be more capable of action and the exercise of virtue *." St. Gregory was of the most amiable courtesy. When Eulogius, a bishop, was recovered from a fit of sickness, he sent him a horse, but he declared that he himself was not able to ride on an ass, when five were sent to him from Sicily. Fortunatus, a bishop, has written the life of the blessed Germain, bishop of Paris. He says that the holy man had but one tunic and one pallium; that he travelled on horseback, and always either spoke, or sung, or heard some word respecting God; but when he sat down at table, there was immediately a minister to recite divine colloquies.

Bede relates that when the king gave a horse, adorned with royal trappings, to the holy bishop Aidan, that he might use it when necessary, for he always went on foot, Aidan gave him in return a poor man; and when the king complained, he appeased him by saying, "Is that offspring of a mare dearer to thee than a son of God?" The king was seized with such reverence, that he fell on his knees, to the great surprise of the holy man; who expressed his fears privately to others, that so humble a king was not long for this world. St. Cæsareus said, that bishops were bound to the utmost frugality, however rich the church might be. "Not only the tithes are not ours, but whatever we have received from God more than is necessary for us, we ought to give to the poor †." In these ages the laity were taught that they too, beside their tenths, ought to give their superfluity to the poor. In private, John the Almoner, patriarch of Alexandria, would retain nothing costly for himself. Sometimes a rich citizen would send him a woollen covering for his bed, with a large sum, saying, that if he loved him, he would use it. John complied for one night only, and his domestics heard him condemn himself for such luxury, while so many poor were starving with cold. At dawn of day he started from that precious bed, and sent it to be sold for the poor. Pardulus, bishop of Lyons, in his life of Hincmar, archbishop of Rheims,

* Leg. II. Epist. 37.

† Hom. IX.

gives a wonderful account of the simplicity and austerity of that holy man's living. In the time of Louis the Pious, the clergy were ordered to lay aside all belts and ornaments of gold and silver *, which when Tarasius succeeded to the patriarchal see of Constantinople, he also prohibited to all members of the clergy †. Balsamon, illustrating the canon of a council, shows the indecorum of a clerk wearing a military ornament, and the fathers of the seventh general council expressed the same sentiment, adding, "all marks of boasting and bodily ornament are foreign from the sacerdotal order ‡." Nevertheless, Ives, bishop of Chartres, writing to Pope Paschal the Second, appears to have been persuaded that, in his age, it was necessary to keep up the respect of men for the episcopal office, by some exterior marks of dignity §; and this is the more remarkable, as Ives was deeply learned in the ancient discipline of the church, and most ardent in his love of holy poverty. St. Bernard would allow of no secular vanities in those who held benefices. "It is granted that you should live of the altar, but it does not follow that you are to luxuriate of the altar. Whatever you retain of the altar besides necessary food and simple raiment, is not yours; it is rapine, it is sacrilege ||." His contemporary, Gilbert, bishop of London, gave all that he possessed to the poor, and lived in voluntary poverty. Peter, the venerable abbot of Cluny, would never suffer any other but a wooden cross to be presented to the dying. When the blessed Antonine, archbishop of Florence, died, all that was found in his palace consisted in some of the poorest furniture and a mule, and he was, therefore, buried at the public expense. The blessed Laurence Justinian, the first of the Venetian patriarchs, had only a family of five servants; his table was most frugal, and though constantly reading or writing, he had not even any books of his own. Thomas Cantipratensis shows that Maurice, archbishop of Rouen, prescribed to his steward, that out of an annual supply of 12,000 livres, he was to devote two or three thousand to the expenses of his family, and that the rest was for the poor ¶. He also mentions a certain Dominican, who be-

* Duchesne, tom. II. p. 298.

† Surius, die 25 Febr. ‡ Can. XVI.

§ Epist. CCXL. || Epist. II. ¶ Lib. I. cap. 8.

came Bishop of Bosnia, and when he had a yearly return of 8000 marcs, hardly expended anything on himself or his family, not even keeping a horse, but only an ass, which used to carry his books and sacred furniture; he made his visitations on foot, accompanied with brethren of his order, giving great alms, and preaching by the way*. St. Bernard commemorates the simplicity of the blessed Malachy, archbishop of Armagh, who reserved nothing fixed for himself, no allowance for his table, not even a house, spending his whole time visiting different parts of his province, living by the work of his hands, and sleeping by night in the churches. He travelled on foot, a bishop and a legate. Not different in manner from St. Malachy, was St. Charles, archbishop of Milan. No one appeared in his house but clerks, or such at least as wore a clerical dress. No luxuries were on his table, no exquisite paintings in his hall, although they greatly delighted him; but the walls were naked and white. Cardinal Ximenes, archbishop of Toledo, would always travel on foot, or riding on an ass. No fine furniture, no golden or silver vessels appeared in his palace; and under the purple which became his office, he wore the habit of his order, and slept upon the poor bed which was prescribed by the rules of St. Francis. To him Wadding applies the description of Agrippa, saying that he was always nearer to rusticity than to delights†. Lastly, all the ancient canons relative to the simplicity and frugality belonging to the sacerdotal manners, were confirmed by the Council of Trent‡, which pronounced "that they should hold out a model to all other men, of frugality, modesty, and continence; that the bishops should be content with modest furniture and with simple fare; and that nothing should ever appear in their houses or mode of life which was contrary to this holy institute, and which did not bespeak simplicity, the zeal for God, and a contempt for vanities§."

By the Council of Agatha, as also by that of Epaone in 517, bishops, priests, and deacons, are forbidden, on pain of suspension, to keep dogs and birds for hunting. St.

* Lib. II. c. 57.

† Annal. Minorum, vols. XV. and XVI.

‡ Sess. 22. cap. 10.

§ Sess. 25. Thomassin. III. Lib. III. cap. 34. cap. 41.

Boniface, archbishop of Mayence, prohibited the clergy from all hunting*. Similar prohibitions were made by various councils†. By the Council of Trull, even the laity were forbidden to appear at public spectacles of dancing; and the councils of Spain were most severe upon them who assisted at the profane dances before the churches on the festivals of the saints. St. Ambrose says, “We find no just man in the number of hunters throughout the whole series of the Scriptures‡.” The Pythagoreans did not allow themselves to hunt§; so that at least the ancient philosophy would approve of the ecclesiastical discipline in this respect, which might be irksome to mere solitary rustics.

By the Council of Macon, in 585, bishops were forbidden to guard their houses with dogs, as being contrary to hospitality. The ancient canons equally prohibited the clergy from all games at dice or tables, or chess, which were also forbidden by the laws of Justinian, and by the apostolic canons, the prohibition, however, was extended equally to the laity.

St. Caesareas, at Arles, had always a table prepared for guests and clergymen who travelled. “While he lived no one came to Arles as to a strange city, but as to his own house ||.” At these meals there was always a sacred lesson read aloud, according to universal usage in Episcopal houses, even when strangers were entertained. The council of Toledo ordered that the Holy Scriptures should be read aloud at the table of bishops¶, from whose houses the custom passed to the Court of Seculars, for not only Charlemagne when entertaining kings, and private noblemen at their feudal manors, but also the Greek emperors at Constantinople, had always something solemn from the holy fathers read aloud at table. St. Gregory of Tours, describes the monastery and hospice built by Domnolus, bishop of Mans. As the poor were often excluded from entering by the guards who kept watch upon

* Epist. CV.

† Concil. Epaonens. Can. 4.; Concil. Liptinens. Can. 2.; Concil. Suessionens. Can. 3.; Concil. Trull. Can. 51. liber Pœnitent. Gregorii, P. III.; Concil. Turonens, III. Can. 7.; Concil. Gall. tom. II. p. 157.

‡ Amb. in Psal. 118. Oct. 8. D. 86. c. 11.

§ Jamblich. Cap. 28. || Vita ejus, Lib. I. c. 31.

¶ Can. 7.

the walls, he built the hospice without the walls, and placed there twenty monks and an abbot, whose duty it was to shew hospitality to the poor *. Gregory the Great entertained all strangers who came to Rome †; and he gave attention to cause other bishops to exercise hospitality. When he invited Marianus, archbishop of Ravenna, to Rome, to consult the physicians, he advised him to appoint some person in his absence who should supply his place in entertaining guests at Ravenna. Pope Martin replied to certain imperial questions as to the reception that the patriarch Pyrrus would meet at Rome, “Do you not know the Roman church? Every wretched man that comes there is received to hospitality; all things needful are given to him. St. Peter rejects no one, sends away no one without gifts. The whitest bread and diverse kind of wines are given to him and to all who belong to him. If this be done to miserable persons, what expense would be spared on the reception of such an honourable guest as a bishop ‡?” St. Benedict prescribed in his rule the constant practice of hospitality, especially to the poor and to strangers, because in them Christ is more immediately received §. Isidore admits of no bounds to Episcopal hospitality, from the motive of those words of Christ, “Hospes fui et suscepistis me.” A laic receiving one or two fulfils the duty of hospitality. A bishop, if he doth not receive all men is inhuman ||. If all the faithful should desire to hear that sentence, Hospes fui, addressed to themselves, how much more the bishop whose hostel ought to be open to every one.

Hospitality became abused in some of the monasteries of Spain, so that the monks were forbidden by a council to receive any世俗s excepting the poor, and those of such known virtue and religion, that there would be no interruption to the silence and sacred leisure of the cloister ¶. The councils and capitularies were also express in forbidding priests and monks to enter a tavern for the

* Surius die 16. Maiæ.

† John. Diacon. Lib. II. c. 19.

‡ Baron. an. 645.

§ Cap. 53. 56.

|| De Offic. Eccles. Lib. II. cap. 5.

¶ Concil. Matisconens. Can. 5; Concil. Suessionens. Can. 3; Concil. Ilerdens. Can. 1; Concil. Gall. tom. II. p. 94. 152. 232; Capitular. Carol. Mag. Lib. I. c. 70. and Lib. VI. c. 285, 286; Lib. VII. c. 91, 92, 93. 103, 104; Concil. Mogunt. Can. 17.

sake of eating or drinking *. The councils of Rheims and Francfort repeated this prohibition, but cases of necessity on a journey were always excepted. A certain bishop wished to make a distinction between dice and chess, at the latter of which he had played, but he recognized his error, and had for his penance to recite the Psalter three times, to wash the feet of twelve poor, and to give money to each of them. This was prescribed by Peter Damian. The councils even included chess in their prohibition †. Recreations that resembled an occupation, constant society, and incessant greetings, would have but ill agreed with the office of those who were charged to salute no man by the way, and who were forbidden to pass from house to house. The chief men in philosophy, according to the discipline of Pythagoras, were to know nothing of the Forum or of the courts of justice, or of the state councils, to keep aloof from political factions, and those concerned with the creation of magistrates, and not so much as to dream of suppers or other feasts ‡. Cicero thinks that Erucius fully cleared Sexius Roscius from the charge of luxury, when he said that he was never even present at any banquet §. These views harmonized with the ecclesiastical discipline. By the canons of the council of Lyons in the year 475, and by the council of Agde in 506, clerks were forbidden to appear at banquets : by the canons of Chrodogang, all assemblies of men, whether courts or tribunals, or feasts or convivial meetings, are to be shunned by them as so many chains of pleasures. The company of seculars, and especially of the great, is to be avoided, say the English canons ||. By the canons of the council of Orleans, in the year 533, it was ordered that no priest should reside with seculars without the permission of his bishop. “The convivial meetings of seculars are to be avoided,” says St. Jerome, writing to a priest, “and especially of those who are puffed up with honours ¶.”

Hospitality, however, was of great moment in the in-

* Concil. Gall. tom. II. p. 136. Capitular. Lib. I. c. 14.

† Concil. Biterrens. an. 1255.

‡ Jamblich. Adhortat. ad Philosoph. cap. 14.

§ Pro. S. Roscio.

|| Crodogangi Regula Canonic. cap. 58. apud Dacher. Spicileg. tom. I.

¶ Epist. XXXIV. ad Nepotian.

stitution of clerical life. When bishops travelled they were entertained by other bishops : hence the complaints of St. Chrysostom to Pope Innocent concerning Theophilus, Bishop of Alexandria, because coming to Constantinople he had not descended at the bishop's house, where all things were ready to refresh him*. St. Augustin had always meat for his guests. Nazianzen says that Julian wished to inspire the heathens with this spirit of hospitality, but that the Gentile superstition refused to imitate it†. The Agapæ, however, were attended with such abuses that St. Ambrose and St. Augustin succeeded in abolishing them‡. Avitus, Archbishop of Vienne, gave Maximian, a bishop, a letter of introduction to Cæsarea, Archbishop of Arles, in which he says, “a priest can never be called a foreigner wherever the Catholic Church is found§.”

Charlemagne used often to be entertained at bishops' houses, where he was always well received. It was understood that all persons of public office coming to his court, or returning from it, should be received in the bishop's palaces or in monasteries ; but to meet this claim there was an express law in favour of the hosts. “Similarly also we decree that the manner of silence and of canonical quiet is to be observed so as to be disturbed by no exterior guest||.” Wealth is exhausted by secular ostentation, not by Episcopal charity, so that while kings and nobles were well entertained, there were never wanting supplies for innumerable poor. This discipline of “gist” is hardly found out of France, where the royal majesty and the episcopacy were so closely united in sentiment and object.

In the time of Charlemagne it appears that the councils insisted upon four things to be observed in Episcopal hospitality—frugality in the fare, the presence of the poor, and of strangers travelling, and spiritual reading¶. There is the following law of Charles the Bald. “We wish that priests, who ought to shew a good example to

* Socrat. Lib. VII. c. 4. 11. 13.

† Orat. I. in Jul.

‡ Baron. an. 391.

§ Epist. IX. Concil. Cæsaraugust. III. Can. 3.

|| Thomass. III. Lib. I. cap. 39.

¶ Concil. Remens. II. Can. 7. 18 ; Concil. Turonens. III. Can. 5, 6 ; Concil. Paris, VI. Can. 14 ; Concil. Aquisgran. II. Can. 1. 3. Capitular. I. c. 75.

all men, may be hospitable. Let them also admonish their parishioners to be hospitable, and never to refuse a lodging to those who are travelling. And that all occasion of rapine may be taken away, let nothing be sold dearer to wayfarers than it was in the markets: but if they wish to sell dearer, let the travellers refer this to the priest, and let them sell according to his sentence, with humanity*. Wherever there was a parish priest there was a house to receive strangers and the poor, and a hospice for the purpose was always adjoining a cathedral church†. All this may still be verified by experience in other lands. From Engelberg, with one companion, I crossed the Storek Alp, and descended on a summer's evening into the Melch Thal which joins the vale of Sarnen. Kropol hath but a few houses and a church, but the curate remarked us from his window, and invited us into his house. As the rain had fallen in torrents during many hours, we had made bare our feet, and having a careless livery, that argued no great wealth in the possessors, that hospitality had all the merit of being offered to the poor. Never shall I forget the gracious benevolence of that good priest, and his holy simplicity; for when the bell tolled during supper, he invited us to repeat with him the angel's salutation. The council of Trent confirmed all the ancient canons enforcing the exercise of hospitality ‡, and especially prescribing it to bishops, to be observed without respect of persons. It was the ancient rule that the poor were first to be received, and that the rich were not to be cast out. The hospitality of the church to the poor was for their relief, that to the rich was like a snare to entice them to be bountiful, that they might contribute to support the poor, and also that the sanctity of the cloister might produce a salutary impression upon the minds of the rich, and gradually win them from the world, so that seculars themselves might learn from frequenting these seminaries to love and practise the simplicity, the religious quiet, the piety and the heavenly conversation of holy men. S. Liudger used to invite both the poor and the rich to dinner, and during the banquet he used to supply them also with the sweet delights of spiritual food.

* Capit. Carol. Calv. p. 471.

† Regula Crodogan. cap. 45; Concil. Aquisg. 141.

‡ Cap. 23.

It must, however, have tried the zeal and charity of holy men, when to further their devout object, they were obliged to conform to popular customs, which were semi-barbarous. William of Malmesbury, in his life of Wolstan, Bishop of Worcester, says that, “he was most abstemious at table, although in his hall, after the manner of the Saxons, men used to drink whole hours after dinner, while he sitting by would ruminate on the Psalms. Yet in his order he would pretend to drink ; others poured out foaming cups ; he holding his poor little vase would invite them to hilarity, satisfying more the custom of the country than the judgment of his own mind *.” The house of S. Charles at Milan, was open to all the world. “There,” says Giosso, “were poor people, and pilgrims, and strangers of distant nations, cardinals, bishops, prelates, vicars, and procurators, and sometimes he would give these guests horses and money to enable them to pursue their journey †.” There are extant letters of St. Charles, relating how he received some English students on their way to Rome, and saying how he wished that in future all who passed would visit him, that he might entertain them while at Milan. Wilfred, a young Englishman, being on his pilgrimage to Rome came to Lyons, where he and all his companions were received by the Archbishop Dalfinus, who was so pleased with his gracious appearance and manners, that he proposed detaining him, offering him his niece in marriage, and the government of a great part of Gaul, and promising that he would be a father to him ; but Wilfred replied, “I must fulfil my vows to God, which require that I should visit the apostolic seat, in order that I may learn the rules of ecclesiastical discipline, to the end that our nation may better serve God, and that I may be able to expect the reward promised to him who leaves father and mother that he may possess eternal life.” On his return, however, he remained three years with the Archbishop, learning many things from the learned doctors who surrounded him ‡.

* Willielmi Malmesburiensis de Gestis Pontificum Anglorum, Lib. IV.

† Thomass. Pars III. Lib. III. cap. 47. 49.

‡ Mabillon Acta, S. Ordinis Benedict. Sæc. IV. Pars I. cap. 4.

Episcopal liberality in the middle ages was worthy of kings. Hear what says the historian who relates the coronation of Philip I. at Rheims in the year 1059, after describing the solemn ceremony : "All these things passed with the greatest devotion and the most lively joy. The Archbishop Gervais received all the assistants with kindness, and entertained them largely at his own expense, although he was not bound to receive any one unless the king himself ; but he did it for the honour of his church and through generosity *."

We have already seen enough to be convinced that the indirect influence of the clergy during the middle ages must have been immense ; it remains to examine the direct and specific channels by which the justice of those who were separate to the church was made to flow through the different members of the Christian state. These may be considered in twofold capacity, ordinary, universal, and what may be termed devotional, beyond what was of general obligation to meet particular occasions. Instances of the latter might easily be multiplied from the books not only of ecclesiastical, but also of civil history. St. Columban in the fifth century, was born in Ireland, in the Province of Leinster ; he left his country to preach through Gaul, where he raised himself powerful enemies by boldly admonishing sinners. Fredegaire says in his history, " In the fourteenth year of the reign of Theodoric, the reputation of St. Columban had spread through all the cities and provinces of Gaul and Germany. Being universally venerated, the king Theodoric used often to visit him at Luxeuil, in order humbly to beg the favour of his prayers. Having received him frequently in his monastery, the man of God began to question him, and to ask how he could deliver himself up to adultery with concubines, rather than enjoy the happiness of marriage." You see how the action of the clergy commences under the form of hospitality. Behold it now in the casual intercourse of life. It happened once that St. Valery, Abbot of St. Valery in Picardy, who died in 622, when returning on foot from a place called Cayeux to his monastery, in the winter time, stopped to warm himself, on account of the extreme cold, in a house by the way side. The host and his companions, who

* Collect. des Mém. relat. à l'Hist. de France, tom. VII. 92.

ought to have received such a guest with great respect, began on the contrary to speak with the judge of the place in a very light and improper manner. Faithful to his custom of always applying to corrupt and hideous wounds the salutary remedy of the Divine word, he endeavoured to correct them, saying, “My sons, have you not seen in the Gospel that in the day of judgment we shall have to render an account of every light word?” but they, despising his admonitions, abandoned themselves more and more to gross and immodest language, for the mouth speaks out of the abundance of the heart. Upon which he said, “I had wished, on account of the cold, to warm a little my fatigued body, but your guilty discourse obliges me to withdraw still frozen as I am,” and so saying he went out of the house *. Let us take an instance from the Saxon chronicle. “Eadbald, King of Kent, renounced his baptism and lived in a heathen manner, so that he took to wife his father’s widow. Then Laurentius, who was Archbishop in Kent, resolved to depart southward over sea, and abandon every thing. But there came to him in the night the Apostle Peter, and severely chastised him, because he would so desert the flock of God. And he charged him to go to the king, and teach him the right belief. And he did so; and the king returned to the right belief.”

S. Aldric, Bishop of Sens, as he sat one day near the church of St. Stephen, saw pass a man named Marrymardus, whose countenance and gait gave evident indication of his mind’s insolence. The prelate not daunted by his terrible looks, proceeded to admonish him, that if he had such authority over others he ought to show that he could govern also himself, and to remind him that he was but dust and ashes, and thus pouring in wine and oil into the wounds of this poor man, he succeeded at length in removing pride and vanity from his heart: insomuch that this haughty governor of the state submitted himself afterwards to the humble condition of a monk †.

When Philip I. was endeavouring to have his marriage with the virtuous Bertha declared null, through an adulterous passion for Bertrade, wife of the Count of Anjou,

* Acta S. Ord. S. Bened. tom. II. 86.

† Mabillon, Acta S. Ord. Bened. Sæcul. IV. Pars I.

and had even summoned the Archbishop of Rheims, Ives de Chartres, and other prelates, to assist at his marriage, he found in Ives an insuperable obstacle. This worthy successor of the Apostles immediately wrote to him declaring that he would never consent to be present at such an act. "If a council were to be summoned," said he, "it might be examined whether you can lawfully be divorced according to the canons; but now, since I am absolutely called to Paris to assist at your marriage with one whom I know not whether she can be your wife, on account of my conscience, which I must preserve before God, and on account of my fame, which a good priest should maintain before those who are without, I would rather that a mill-stone were tied to my neck, and that I were cast into the sea, rather than by me the weakest of the weak should be offended *." At the same time he wrote to the Archbishop of Rheims, to convince him that he could not in conscience make this marriage, and "to the Archbishop of Lyons, Legate of the Pope, to inspire him with zeal to oppose such a scandalous outrage to justice and religion. These letters had full success, for these prelates fulfilled their duty admirably †.

But Ives de Chartres distinguished himself above them all by his courage in executing the orders of the Pope, and exhorting the king to penance; for which he was cast into prison; and when the people of Chartres were for delivering him by force, he appeased them, and declared that he would never return to his church by violence, and that he only sought their prayers for his deliverance. From his prison he wrote to the king a noble letter, concluding with saying, that he hoped, from the mercy of God, that his majesty would know one day that the wounds of those who love us, are better than the deceitful kisses of those who flatter us. In the council of Poictiers, the king was a second time excommunicated, notwithstanding the most violent opposition by the Duke of Aquitaine and a crowd of seculars, who attempted even to kill the legates, by mounting into the high galleries of the church, and thence casting down stones upon them when they saw them about to fulminate the sentence. One ecclesiastic, who stood at their side, was killed, and his blood

* Ivonis Carnot. Epist. XV.

† Hist. de Suger, Lib. I.

sprinkled the altar, but the intrepid legates, to show how little they regarded the stones, which flew on all sides, even took off their mitres and proceeded with the sentence, so that the fury of the seditious was in vain. The Count was obliged to make satisfaction, and the king and Bertrade incurred the penalty. In course of time, when Philip evinced real sorrow, and difficulties were needlessly thrown in the way of his being absolved, it was Ives de Chartres who came forward in his behalf in the council of Beaugency, rebuked those who were taking advantage of his distress, and seizing him by the hand, raised him from his knees, saying, let us depart, sire, I charge myself with your absolution ; thus fulfilling what he had predicted to the king, that the wounds of a friend were better than the kiss of flatterers, for then had all men forsaken him. At length after solemnly promising to leave Bertrade for ever, the king barefooted, and with all the signs of a true penitent, coming before the Episcopal assembly, and begging pardon of the church for the scandal he had given, was absolved along with Bertrade by the legate.

St. Raymond, of Pennafert, born of that illustrious house in Catalonia, in the year 1175, which is allied to the kings of Arragon, had entered the order of St. Dominick, and had been called to the court of James II. king of Arragon. Finding that the king would not attend to the advice which he gave him in the affairs of his conscience, he left the court. This noble firmness, which God approved by a striking miracle, brought the king to himself, and caused his return to the way of justice.

Pope Clement VI. than whom, as Petrarch says, no one could ever have better merited the name, ordered Casimir, King of Poland, to send back his mistress, and to be faithful to his wife. This prince at first refused, but at length submitted, and underwent the penance imposed upon him. When king Richard was setting a bad example to the army of Paladins during their stay in Sicily, a holy man, Joachim, came forth from the grottoes of Calabria to remind the pilgrims of their solemn duty, and to restrain the scandal of their lives *.

St. Antony of Padua, heard that the tyrant Eccelinus had lately put a number of men to death at Verona.

* Brompton Chronic. an. 1191. -

Immediately he went to him, and entering his presence said, "There is hanging over thee, thou fell tyrant, the horrible doom of Almighty God. How long wilt thou persist in shedding innocent blood?" All persons present expected nothing else but that Eccelinus would order his immediate execution. The event, however, was not so ; for like a lamb he humbled himself before the man of God, prostrated himself on the ground, confessed aloud his iniquities, and promised amendment. In fact, during the rest of his life, he refrained from many crimes which he had before been in the habit of committing *. Ere we come to the end of our course we shall see what were the sufferings of the clergy in consequence of their zeal in this respect ; nevertheless, we may admire here the beauty of these instances, where the proud bold baron, or the mighty ruler of the earth, is seen to hold their temper in such high respect, and curb himself even of his natural scope, when they did cross his humour. Unlike the hero of Corioli, the warrior who would have scorned the force of domestic affections, and remained inflexible before the tears of suppliant women, became gentle when confronted with the plain heroic greatness of the Catholic priest, the humble minister of the spiritual society whose power is still hidden here below.

Glaber Radulphus, a monk of Cluni, who wrote in the reign of king Robert, relates that a count of Anjou built a church near Tours, in honour of the celestial hierarchy. As he had oppressed his people with many injuries, he thought by building this church to reconcile himself to God. But when he asked the bishop of Tours to dedicate it, that prelate refused to do so, until the count had restored to the poor people all that he had tyrannically extorted from them. Of the zeal and ingenuous charity of the clergy in converting men to justice, history can furnish endless details.

Bourdoise, a missionary priest in the reign of Louis XIII. on one occasion being unable in the morning to gain the attention of certain villagers, went in the evening, and finding them playing at bowls, played with them, and having persuaded the peasant who was on his side, he made use of him to persuade the others, and so succeeded in making them all listen to him, and thus

* Wadding, Annales Minorum, an. 1231.

furnished them with spiritual succour *. St. Francis Xavier used to visit persons of the most abandoned manners, pretending to know nothing of their course of life, and by degrees introducing subjects of piety till he converted them †. When sailing from Cochin to Cambaya there was in the ship a Portuguese gentleman who made a boast of his impiety. The saint immediately marked him out for his companion, and endeavoured to please him by agreeable conversation, but whenever he uttered a word about salvation, the other would not hear him. Xavier was not to be discouraged: he continued to treat him with kindness. On landing at Camanor they two went alone to walk in a wood of palm trees, and there the saint took occasion to display the fervour of his charity, for after giving himself the discipline and then making a prayer to Jesus Christ, the gentleman was so astonished and moved, that he threw himself at his feet and made his confession in the very grove, and ever after lived like a good Christian.

There was a Portuguese gentleman at Meliapor who led a scandalous life, keeping a house like a seraglio. St. Francis Xavier came self-invited, and prepared to dine with him: he spoke on common subjects, and finally went away without saying a word respecting his course of life. The gentleman believed that this silence of the saint boded him no good, and that he had nothing further to expect but a disasterous death and an eternal ruin. With this thought he hastened to visit him: "O my father," said he, "how your silence has spoken to my heart! I have not had a moment's repose since you left my house! O, if my ruin be not absolutely determined, behold me at your feet, and do with me what you may judge best for my soul: I will obey you implicitly." The saint embraced him, and after reminding him that the mercy of God was infinite, disposed him to a general confession, which was followed by his total conversion to a holy life. Three famous robbers on Mont Casal, were converted by the humility and charity of St. Francis of Assisium. The holy man began by sending them bread and wine, and messages, entreating their forgiveness, because the father, guardian of one convent, had closed

* Lebeuf, Hist. du Diocèse de Paris, tom. VII. 66.

† Bouhours, Vie D. S. F. X. 16.

the doors against them in his absence *. On journeys St. Francis and his companions always with salutary and simple words exhorted every one they met to the love of God and to penance for sins. The Catholic priest might boldly admonish men when clearly it was nothing but the sincerest love which induced him to administer correction “Nor ought it to seem too laborious to doctors,” says St. Odo, abbot of Cluny, “to pour out tears for the conversion of sinners, when He that was made man, and created all things, poured out his blood for our sins upon the cross †.” Moreover, the success of the clergy on such occasions must have been greatly facilitated in consequence of their generous and heroic character, which could not but incline men to listen to their admonitions; for it did not escape observation, that in the worst of times, all the sweet and noble virtues of humanity, enriched with the unction of grace, were sure to be displayed to the consolation of wretched men, by ecclesiastics. Poets remarked that some clergyman of holy reverence was always found constant to a fallen king, and what shall we say of their constancy in friendship? The famous John of Salisbury followed St. Thomas into exile at the risk of his life. When the beautiful and virtuous Adelaide, daughter of Ridolphus, king of Burgundy, and widow of Lothaire, king of Italy, had refused to unite herself to the son of Berenger, who had caused the ruin of her husband, and perhaps his death, she was plundered of all her riches, and shut up by the Berengers in a fort, on the lake of Garda, where Willa, the wife of Berenger, went so far as to ill-treat her even with blows, as is related by the nun Rosvida, a poetess of that age. as also by Odo, abbot of Cluny. After remaining there with a female servant, for a considerable time, it was a priest named Martin who succeeded in releasing them, by making an aperture in the wall, and a subterraneous mine. The illustrious captives and their brave deliverer hid themselves in a wood near the lake of Garda, where if it had not been for the succour of a fisherman, they would probably have perished with hunger. She was subsequently admitted by Azzo into the strong fortress of Carossa, which Berenger besieged, with the

* Les Chroniques des Frères Mineurs, Lib. I. c. 86.

† S. Odonis Collat. Lib. III. Bibliothec. Cluniacens.

hope of recovering her person ; but the castle was impregnable. Otho, coming from Germany, set her at liberty, and admiring her virtue and beauty, made her his wife. Essentially indeed the clerical was an heroic character. If, by the canon law, persons who evinced a disposition contrary to ecclesiastical mildness, were irregular, and could not be ordained *, on the other hand, by the sacred canons, all clerks were to be deposed who were known to be inclined to flattery. The words of St. Athanasius to the Abbot Dracontius, were strictly an ecclesiastical axiom, *οὐ πρέπει τῷ καιρῷ δουλεύειν, ἀλλὰ τῷ Κυρίῳ.* Men of chivalrous generosity could not but love a priesthood the members of which were even distinguished by the most lofty and delicate sense of honour. Gilles de Rome, styled the blessed doctor, prior of the Augustinian hermits, and hearer of St. Thomas of Aquin, in the schools of Paris, though of the Colonna family, and preceptor of Philip-le-Bel, for whose use he composed his book on the government of princes, nevertheless wrote in defence of pope Boniface VIII., after the outrage committed against him by his relation, under the auspices of his royal patron, who for this noble act would never forgive him, or suffer him to become a member of the sacred college †. Henry IV., before besieging Rouen, took possession of Louviers by means of a priest named Jean de la Tour, who betrayed the gates to him. A prebendal stall in the cathedral of Evereux, was his recompense from the king ; but the clergy of Evereux, not being able to endure the presence of this man, dispensed him from residence. As, notwithstanding this privilege, he used to come every year to assist at the office of the holy week, and of Easter, the canons conspired together, and agreed to absent themselves towards the end of the psalm which precedes the Benedictus at Lauds, in order that the chorist might bear to him the anthem, *Traditur autem,* which is sung at this canticle. The traitor was thus surprised, and forced to sing his own condemnation, and the complaint which he made afterwards only turned to his greater confusion ‡. During the middle ages, fidelity in the accomplishment of all the sacerdotal duties ensured

* Joan. Devot. Instit. Can. Lib. I. tit. VII. 1.

† Bulæus, Hist. Universit. Paris, tom. III.

‡ Hist. d'Evreux, 360.

to the clergy an immense influence, and gave them a prodigious moral power. Truly an archbishop of Canterbury might boldly defend the rights of his church, when, like St. Thomas, he had been accustomed to sit at supper surrounded with all the poor of the city: an archbishop of Canterbury, of whom Petrus Cellensis, abbot of St. Remy, could say, that “he naked was following Christ, hanging naked on the cross, and imitating the vestiges of the ancient saints, might, without any misgivings, oppose himself as a wall for the house of Israel*.” Pascasius Radbert, describing the Abbot Wala, asks, “but how could such a humble man, and one so dead to the world, be found speaking with such boldness before senators and emperors? He it was whom neither the terror of threats, nor the force of kings, nor the hope of what is present, nor the fear of what is future, nor the promise of advantages, nor the fear of any kind of punishment, nor any authority, could ever recall from the charity of Christ, from the love of his country and of his people, from the love of the churches, and from the faith which he owed to the emperor. Therefore, like another Jeremiah, he constantly spoke such things, lifting his voice against the crimes and abuses of the palace†.” Such men were not likely to prove timid friends to truth, osiers that could never make beams to bear stress in the church. They were men ready to make any sacrifice, and who very often had, at an early period of their course sacrificed all the human and earthly ties that could have withheld them from performing their divine duty. When the emperor Constance required pope Liberius at Milan to subscribe the condemnation of St. Athanasius, on pain of exile, the pontiff replied, “I have already bid adieu to my brethren who are at Rome; the laws of the church are dearer to me than a residence in this city.” They sought nothing personal from kings. St. Hilary of Poictiers wrote to the emperor Constance in these terms. “You bow your head to receive the benediction of the bishops, and you trample under foot their faith.”

We come, in fine, to consider the direct and ordinary method of extending the influence of ecclesiastical justice to all members of the body of Christ, which was by evan-

* Petri Cellens. Epist. Lib. I. 10.

† Mabillon, Sæcul. IV. pars I. Acta S. Ord. Bened.

gelizeing the nations, and announcing to every creature the word of life.

The history of the preachers and apostles of the Christian religion, during the middle ages, is even, in a poetical, and philosophic point of view, a rich mine, of the existence or extent of which but few modern readers seem at all aware. I can but indicate it, and as it were point out the spot, but without attempting to explore it. What a life, from infancy to martyrdom, was that of St. Adalbert, bishop of Prague, the first apostle of Prussia, in the tenth century, son of Count Slawnik, in Bohemia, and closely related to the sovereigns of Bohemia and of Germany, as given by Canisius and others! The pages of the *Bibliotheca Patrum*, or the acts of the saints of the order of St. Benedict, which at one time embraced nearly the whole church, or the annals of the Camaldoleses, which relate the preaching and martyrdom of these servants of God, cannot be read without experiencing the same impressions as are produced by hearing the first victories of Christ's messengers. The apostle of Livonia was Meinhard, an Augustinian monk of the monastery of Sigeberg, in Holstein. Already an aged man, he renounced the peace of his cloister for the devout and perilous enterprise of converting that heathen people from whom he had nothing to expect but martyrdom. Independent of all other evidence, a true miracle, a palpable interposition of a supernatural hand, must be recognised in the zeal and perseverance with which these monks of the tenth and eleventh centuries offered themselves to death for the Gospel in all the northern lands of Germany, the inhabitants of which, on account of their ferocity and impure superstition, are styled by Bishop Christian, in his *Chronikle*, "the children of Belial." Christian, the Cistercian monk, who brought the heavenly light to so many people of the north, came out of the beautiful cloister Oliva, near Danzig, in Pomerania, which was one of the first foundations there on its conversion to Christianity. Among the holy missionaries along with Albert the bishop, went one who had formerly won renown in arms, as a noble knight in the host of Henry the Lion. This was Bernard de Lippa, in Westphalia, who was now a Cistercian monk *. In the year 1225, William, a bishop

* Chronic. Montis Sereni.

and legate of the pope, came into that part of Prussia which is beyond Poland and Pomerania. "where," says the monk Alberic, "not by strength, but by wisdom and genius, he converted many of the Pagans, whose language he in a great measure learned. It was for this end that with great labour he translated into that barbarous tongue, Donatus, the same "who deigned to put his hand to the first art," as St. Bonaventura says, on pointing him out to Dante, in Paradise. William of Modena visited Livonia also as legate, admonishing the Teutonic knights to govern the newly converted under the soft yoke of the faith with mildness, not to oppress them, by exacting tithes, or laying any other burthen on them, but in the meek spirit of Christianity to make happy the newly planted churches*. In the eleventh century, Werner, Bishop of Merseburg, who, in his age, like a heavenly star illuminated the whole church, a man of excellent merit in God, and a most vigilant executor of his duty, was inflamed with holy zeal to convert the Pagans. Though ignorant of the Sclavonic language, he was most anxious to impart the Christian faith to that people, and he caused some books to be made in that language with a Latin translation; so that what he did not understand himself he enabled others to understand†. In their apostolic labours, these holy missionaries seemed to place all their trust in the efficacy of just men's prayers. St. Boniface, while among the wild Saxons, addresses an epistle to all the most reverend bishops, venerable priests, white-robed deacons, canons and clerks, to the mitred abbots, and humble abbesses, and the monks subject to them, to the devout virgins consecrated to God, and to all the handmaidens of Christ, and generally to all the Catholics fearing God, of the race and land of the English, imploring them to remember him in their prayers, that our God and Lord Jesus Christ, who wishes all men to be saved, and to come to the knowledge of God, may convert the hearts of the Pagans to the Catholic faith‡. The fame of St. Boniface's sanctity drew crowds of holy men into Germany from Britain, some to discharge the office of readers, others of writers, and others to exercise various

* Voigt Geschichte Preussens, II. 315.

† Winnigstadii Chron. Halberst.

‡ S. Bonif. Epist. VI.

arts, many of whom lived in subjection to him in his regular community, while others dispersing themselves, preached the word of God through the whole region of the Hessians and Thuringians *. These were the conquerors whom our ancestors deemed deserving of their highest honours. St. Cuthbert writes to the bishop Lullus, expressing the joy which England derives from having been deemed worthy to give birth to St. Boniface, the apostle of Germany, who by his preaching and example, had converted such a multitude of Pagans to God ; and he relates, that in a general synod in England, it had been resolved to celebrate the anniversary of his martyrdom, and to choose him, along with the blessed Gregory and Augustin, as patrons of the English †. The life of Valentine, the apostle of Passau, who had come from Britain or Ireland, was found in the year 1120, inscribed in ancient characters upon a leaden tablet inclosed within his tomb, in that church. It began thus, “*Venit ab oceano vir humilis Valentinus nomine, in civitatem Petaviam prædicandi gratia.*” This tablet was probably placed in his grave in the year 768, when the body of the saint was translated from Trent to Passau ‡. An epitaph in the cathedral of Salzburg, by an ancient poet, supposed to be Alcuin, attests the coming of Virgilius from Ireland, for the sake of preaching to that people—

“*Quæ cernis veniens, O lector, inclyta tecta,
Virgilius fecit, Domini deductus amore :
Egregius Præsul meritis et moribus almus :
Protulit in lucem quem mater Hibernia primum.
Sed peregrina petens Christi jam propter amorem,
Delicias mundi, et patriam contempsit amatam ;
Per mare, per terras, partes pervenit in istas
Multiplicare studens tota virtute talentum
Doctrinæ, populis et spargere semina vitæ §.*”

The annals which record the preaching of the Franciscans, and Dominicans, in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, when they sent missionaries to the Tartars, to the Armenians, and to the Sarrassins of Africa, and Palestine, and Babylon, as well as to the Lithuanians, and

* S. Wilibaldus Vit. S. Bonif.

† Id. Epist. LXX.

‡ Germania Sacra, tom. I.

§ Ger. Sacra, tom. II. 95.

other nations of the north, many of whom received the crown of martyrdom while preaching, as also their missions to the West Indies in the two succeeding ages, prove how interminable is this wondrous and sublime history. The blessed Odericus, a Franciscan out of Italy, travelled over nearly the whole world, winning souls to Christ. Persians, Medes, Armenians, Indians, Scythians, and Tartars, heard him announce the Gospel *.

John de Monte Corvino, a minor friar, sent to the East by Pope Nicholas IV. in the year 1289, writes as follows: "I, brother John, departed from Thaurisus, a city of Persia, in the year 1291, and entered India. At the Church of St. Thomas the Apostle, I remained thirteen months, and baptized an hundred persons in various places. Brother Nicholas de Pistoria, of the order of the preachers, was my companion; he died there, and was buried in that Church. Thence proceeding alone, I came to Katag, the kingdom of the Tartars, and presented to the great Cham, letters from our lord the Pope, inviting him to embrace the true faith; but he is too inveterate in idolatry; though he conferred great benefits on the Christians, and I stayed with him during two years. Through the malicious misrepresentation of the Nestorian heretics, I was often dragged to judgment, in peril of death, till God revealed my innocence to the emperor. I remained solitary during eleven years, till brother John Arnold, of Cologne, came to me. I built one Church in the city of Cambaliech, which is the royal residence, and finished it in six years. I made a tower and placed in it three bells. There I baptized about six thousand persons. I also purchased successively, a hundred and fifty boys, sons of Pagans, of the age of seven to eleven, who, as yet, knew no law, and I baptized them, and taught them Latin and Greek; and I wrote out thirty Psalters for them, with hymns, and two breviaries, with which eleven of these boys already know our office, and keep choir as in convents, whether I am present or not; and many of them write out other books; and the lord emperor delights much in their song. I toll the bells at the regular hours, and with this convent of children and babes, do I celebrate the divine office. I think if I had had two or three assistants, perhaps I should at length baptize the empe-

* Wadding, Ann. Minor. tom. VII.

ror. Therefore I entreat that some brethren may be sent out. Twelve years have now passed since I received any news from Rome, or from our order in the west. I want an Antiphonarium, and Lives of the Saints, a Gradual, and a Psalter, noted ; for I have only portable books, and if I had one copy, my boys could write out others. I am about building another Church, and dispersing them through the country. I am now old and grey headed, yet rather through labours and tribulation than age, for I am in my fifty-eighth year. I have learned the language of the Tartars, and translated into that tongue the whole New Testament, and the Psalter ; and I have written them out in their most beautiful letters ; and I write, and read, and preach openly, in testimony of the law of Christ." This letter was written in the year 1305 *. Five years later, that emperor, his mother, and brother, were converted by the same friar John, who was now archbishop with three suffragans. The emperor desired to assume the name of John at his baptism ; and shortly after died, and was buried in the convent.

It was in 1517, the year in which Martin Luther began to disseminate his doctrines, that Martin of Valentia, the apostle of America, began to preach in Spain ; who afterwards compensated in the remotest regions of India, the loss which the Christian Church suffered in the north. His letter in 1531, and that of Peter of Ghent, to his brother friars, in Belgium, in which he describes the manner of the Mexicans, and the preaching and establishments of the Franciscans, amongst them, are most valuable and interesting fragments of history †. This Martin died in the arms of a minor, uttering the words, "Brother, my desire has been frustrated ;" in which he alluded to his desire of martyrdom.

But it was not alone in converting infidel nations, that the zeal of the clergy, during the middle ages, was most remarkably exercised. The less eminent, though equally important office of instruction and admonition, in countries already subject to the Church, opened a field of action, on which we find them indefatigably employed. The spiritual interests of every people, were alike dear to the ambassadors of Christ. In the fifth century, France, directed by Pope Celestine I. sent her St. Germain of

* Wadding, Annal. Minorum, tom. VI.

† Id. tom. XVI.

Auxerre, and St. Lupus, into England ; and these apostolic men preached not only in the churches, but also in the open air. Soon afterwards, the school of Iltut, their disciple, in Glamorganshire, gave Samson and St. Magloire to the see of Dol, in Brittany, and Maclou to that of St. Malos.

Bishops residing almost always in their cathedral city, preached often in the week, and sometimes every day. By authoritative promulgations, they procured obedience to the ecclesiastical discipline ; as when the canons of Ravenna denied entrance to the Church, during one month, to any layman who was heard uttering a blasphemous word, and the sacraments at death, if he had persisted.

Missionaries, who were generally monks, traversed the country, and preached in the churches, or in the open places, in the midst of the people. By the canons of the council of Arles, in the year 813, bishops are enjoined to be careful in instructing the clergy and the people, in the mysteries of the faith ; and priests are required to preach not only in the towns, but in all the parishes. The council of Mayence, in 813, enjoins the clergy to teach the people the necessary prayers in the vulgar tongue ; and the council of Aix-la-Chapelle, in 836, reminds all priests that they must teach the people how they ought to live and die. Thus we read of St. Richarius : “ Such was his fervour to collect souls to Christ, that not confined to his monastery, he visited the churches, camps, and villages, and each of the houses of the faithful, to excite the hearts of his hearers, to the love of the celestial country *.” The fame of this holy man’s sanctity spreading far and wide, king Dagobert came, with all his train, to visit him, in order to commend himself to his prayers. The servant of God strengthened him with his blessing, and corrected him with the free voice of sacerdotal authority, warning him not to become proud with power, nor to trust in uncertain riches, not to be lifted up by the vain sound of applause, nor to take pleasure in perishable honours, but rather to fear the power of God, and to praise his immense glory, to esteem all human power and renown, as nothing, which passes away like a

* Chronic. Centulensis sive S. Richarii apud Dacher. Spicileg. tom. IV.

shadow, and vanishes like the foam upon water, before the least wind ; he reminded him that where more is given, more is required ; and he asked, how could he who would hardly be able to answer for himself, in the day of judgment, endure to give an account for so many thousands of people committed to him ? He said, that every one ought to fear more to be in pre-eminent station, than in one of subjection. This correction, the king, as he was wise, received benignly ; and taking pleasure in the free boldness of truth, he asked the priest of Christ, to come to his banquet ; who being guided by the example of Christ, not disdaining the feast of seculars, came to the table of the king, in order that he might find an occasion of preaching ; and during that whole day and night, he administered the words of God to the guests, amidst the joys of the feast. The king, from this hour, began to love him, and to show him great honour ; and he bestowed a territory upon him, which became the foundation of this monastery *.

Even on journeys we find provision made for hearing the preacher. King Robert, before setting out on his pilgrimage to Rome, sent to inquire for men, especially imbued with the duties of the Divine service ; and the venerable Angelrann, of the monastery of St. Richarius, is proclaimed by all to be most expert ; so that the king took him along with him. During the journey, the hidden riches of this man were made to appear ; for he preached and instilled the word into the hearts of his companions. The king admired his conversation, was delighted with the spotless chastity of his life, was amazed at the eloquence of his tongue, and filled with reverence for the purity of his soul. It is said, that throughout the whole way in which he militated in the divine service, for God and the king, he never wanted to be refreshed by the consolation of books ; “which whether or not it could be,” says this ancient writer, “let the learned judge, but the studious examine †.”

In their zeal to announce to the people what they had received, we find the clergy dauntless, under the most discouraging circumstances, as if ever mindful of the injunction which God gave through his prophet ; “ Son

* Chronic. Centulensis sive Richarii, Lib. I. cap. 18.

† Lib. IV. cap. 2.

of man, thou dwellest in the midst of scorpions ; but speak to them, for perchance they will hear *.”

One need only read the letter of Pope Alexander III. to the archbishop of Upsal, and his suffragans, to form some idea of the evils, in barbarous lands, which were combatted by the holy see.

Truly admirable does their zeal appear in this respect, when contrasted with the spirit of all former teachers, who had appeared amongst mankind. Not even Pythagoras would impart his wisdom to every one. Lysis rebuked Hipparchus for speaking of it to the vulgar, and said, that it was unjust and impious to reveal to common men, the things which were acquired with such pains and labour. There was the distinction of those within or without the veil ; for such was the pride of these teachers, that they made it a mark of great honour, and proficiency, to be admitted within the veil to behold them ; and Pythagoras used to sit with a curtain between him and his hearers, till he had proved them, and judged them worthy to see his face †. How would such teachers have been lost in amaze, on witnessing the humility and condescension of the Catholic philosophers, in communicating their mysteries to the human race ! If they could have heard a Bernardine of Sienna, teaching the duties of his order, and saying, “ Doceant aperte qui suscep-
runt occulte : doceant humane qui suscep-
erunt divine : doceant libenter qui suscep-
erunt silenter : doceant gau-
denter qui accep-
erunt grataanter † ?”

St. Jerome Æmilian, that noble Venetian, the founder of orphan schools, is recorded to have literally made himself all things to all men, to save them. Mixed in the crowd of rustic labourers, assisting them to reap the corn, and to gather in the harvest, he used to explain to them the mysteries of the faith ; binding up the wounds of poor little boys, he used to administer spiritual remedies, while he seemed intent only on taking care of their bodies.

The blessed friar, Lewis of Barga, in the fifteenth century, used to walk through the fields, and hold the plough for the rustics, that he might discourse to them on God, and persuade them to repair to confession §.

I think no one will question any longer the warmth of

* Ezek. ii. † Jamblich. de Pythagoric. Vita, cap. 17.

‡ S. Ber. Senens. tom. III. s. IV. § Ann. Min. tom. XIV.

zeal which was evinced by the clergy of the middle ages, in seeking to convert men ; but it will be asked, to what did they really convert them ? For the statements of modern writers, respecting the ecclesiastical influence, however unjust and monstrous, render some observations, in reply to this question, indispensable. Lorenzo Pignotti, in his history of Tuscany, which I profess not to understand, seems inclined to maintain, that the clergy advocated every abuse, and inculcated every superstition. The assertions, indeed, of a writer, to whom Gibbon and Robertson are always original sources of infallible purity, in whose judgment Locke is the greatest of philosophers, and language the noblest of human inventions, ought not to be rashly interpreted, lest one should treat him with injustice ; but there is a multitude of writers at present who, undoubtedly, entertain such views. Four years have not passed since a splendid edition appeared at Edinburgh, of a work which contained the following sentence, among many others similar. “ The clergy in the middle ages, were lords of the people’s consciences ; and in this capacity employed their influence nearly always to the detriment of the clear and direct authority of honest virtue.” You smile, reader, and accuse me of disrespect, for presenting you with such passages ; but remember, these are taken from popular works, and, perhaps, in some countries, those who have converted literature into a trade, have made the discovery, that no works can be popular, which are not enriched with such passages. They occur, too, in works of a far higher order. “ The monastic apostles of Livonia,” says Voigt, “ brought that heathen people the Christianity of the middle ages ; the religion of monks into which they were to be initiated by a little sprinkling of water. No wonder, therefore, that those heathens should suppose, as they said, that by bathing in a river, they could wash out that poor faith, and obliterate it.” Now truly, reader, my burden is great, that Voigt’s name is laid upon me, whom, I must confess, of all modern historians of his sect, seems worthy of most admiration, since of all such he is the most Catholic ; yet if he will defile the fountains, out of which his flowing streams have proceeded, let us boldly examine with what reason he did it. To neglect at first more positive testimony, how, on such a supposition, can he explain the prodigious change in

the material order of society, which followed the preaching of the men of God, who evangelized the nations of Germany? Has he forgotten those great voices which were heard over the tops of the mountains, in the silence of the night, as if of mourners calling to each other, and lamenting the broken idols which, amidst the acclamations of the converted multitude, had been thrown in the lake of Constance, after the sermon of St. Gall * ?”

Walafrid Strabo says, “that St. Gall remained some time with Theodebert, king of Austrasia, opening the sacred Scriptures to him, and insinuating truth †.” These monastic apostles of Livonia brought with them, as an old writer says, the grace of conversation, the temperance of sobriety, the modesty of patience, the virtue of abstinence, the constancy of preaching, the sweetness of affability ‡, and, undoubtedly, the initiatory sacrament of baptism ; that this was part of the Christianity of the middle ages, one is most ready to admit ; but can this be adduced in evidence, to prove that the clergy of that epoch, neglected to insist upon the exercise of justice, and the observance of the laws of the Gospel? The reader who has condescended to follow me through the former volumes of this work, must feel already convinced how utterly unfounded are all such representations ; but as the investigation cannot fail to bring to light fresh beauties, which lie too often buried or forgotten in the pages of our ancient books, I fearlessly invite him to accompany me on this quest, with a view to ascertain not what was the object of preachers, which would imply in ourselves a most unjustifiable and even ridiculous doubt ; but what were the peculiar characteristics belonging to the instruction of the clergy during the middle ages.

Pope St. Gregory says, “that in order to teach his people, the Lord at no time ceased to send labourers into his vineyard ; for formerly, by the fathers, afterwards by doctors of the law, and prophets, and lastly, by the apostles, he laboured, as if with husbandmen, to till and cultivate it §.” If you ask with what effect? the question becomes wholly different. Our Lord, in three years, made but few disciples ; the first missionaries are said to

* Walafrid Strab. de Vit. S. Gall. cap. 6.

† Id. cap. 3.

‡ Arnold. Lubec. I. c.

§ Hom. XIX.

have only converted seven persons in all Spain. St. Bernard, accordingly, says to Pope Eugene; " You are not obliged to cure, but to spare nothing in order to cure." " I have laboured more than them all," said St. Paul ; he did not say, " I have gained more fruit. Do thou thy duty without anxiety, and without disturbance, and God will do what is right."

It was a celebrated question with the ancient philosophers, whether virtue could be communicated by instruction. Socrates denied that it could be taught ; being not the gift of nature, but the effect of a certain inspiration from heaven *. Theages, Protagoras, Crito, and Simo, wrote books in the same sense † ; which opinion Cicero follows ‡. The Stoics, on the contrary, held with Chrysippus, Cleanthes, and Posidonius, that virtue might be imparted by teaching. The verses of Hesiod were famous ; " He is best of all who of himself understands all things ; and he is good who consents to him who speaks well ; but he who neither of himself knows what is right, nor consents to hear another who announces it, is, indeed, an useless man §." Under the latter supposition, however, the practical results were not so easily obtained. " The Athenians," as Socrates observes, " were not worse when Pericles first began to harangue them, than they were afterwards, when he pronounced before them his last oration ||." It is true, the question could hardly be tried fairly, when the teachers of justice were themselves among the unjust. The honest fisherman in Plautus describes most of them in those times, when replying to the fine discourse of Dæmones :

" Spectavi ego pridem comicos ad istum modum
Sapienter dicta dicere, atque iis plaudier,
Cum illos sapientis mores monstrabant populo ;
Sed cum inde suam quisque ibant divorsi domum,
Nullus erat illo pacto, ut illi jusserant ¶||."

We have already seen what was the justice of the clergy as far as regards themselves. Robertson prefaces his praise of the Catholic missionaries in America, by

* Aeschini Socratici Dialog. I. de virtute. Plato Meno Euthydemus.

† Laert. II. 121.

§ Op. et Dies.

‡ De Nat. Deorum, II. 66.

|| Plato Gorgias.

¶ Rudens, IV. 7.

saying that they were weak and ignorant, but pious men; on which Manzoni remarks, “What is this religion in which weak men when they are pious resist force in favour of their fellow men, and in which the ignorant are able to refute the sophisms which the passions oppose to justice? What is this religion, one may indeed demand, which enables its weak ministers to rise above all the intellectual summits of their age, and to transmit to all posterity monuments of their eminent and heroic justice?”

Guizot, after describing the duties and the oaths prescribed to knighthood, as given by St. Palaye and La Colombière, remarks, “Certainly in this series of oaths, and in the obligations imposed by chivalry, there is a moral development quite foreign from the lay society of this epoch. Moral notions so elevated, often so delicate, so scrupulous, above all so humane, and always stamped with the religious character, emanated evidently from the clergy. The clergy alone in these times thought of the duties and relations of men; their influence was constantly employed in directing the ideas and customs of chivalry to the accomplishment of these duties, and to the amelioration of these relations. Chivalry was not instituted, as I have shown, with this design, for the protection of the weak, the re-establishment of justice, and the reformation of manners: it arose simply without design, as a natural consequence of the Germanic traditions and feudal relations; but the clergy soon took possession of it, and made it an instrument to establish peace in society, and a more enlarged and rigorous morality in private conduct, or, in short, to further the general work which they pursued. The canons of the councils, from the eleventh to the fourteenth century, will show the clergy thus employed in making chivalry subservient to the same result*.”

But now, leaving these modern writers to adjust their differences of opinion, let us proceed to the original sources of information, and observe what is the evidence of history respecting the preaching of the clergy during the middle ages; for it is clear that their instructions are as much matter of history as the orations of Pericles or the apology of Plato.

It is a singular circumstance that the discourses from

* Cours d'Hist. Moderne, tom. IV. 6.

which Maclean and Robertson, and after them a whole host of historic writers, conclude that the clergy during the middle ages, taught men to suppose that the Christian religion imposed no other duty but that of paying tithes, should be precisely those of an eminent servant of God, which have been transmitted to us in great detail by another saint, who wrote the history of his life, a considerable part of which is occupied with recording how he used to preach to the people; a work which is assuredly one of the most interesting literary monuments of that period which the church possesses.

With the early life of St. Eloy, we were made acquainted in a former book. It was then understood at parting, that we should again meet with him, and in the cloisters of Noyon. The moment is arrived to have those hopes verified. The second part of that history presents to us the ecclesiastical life of Eligius, and relates how, at a council held to take measures against heresy and to correct the customs of ordination, Eligius was elected bishop of the church of Noyon, while at the same time Ouen was chosen to preside over that of Rouen. The holy man insisted upon first discharging the clerical functions of a lower rank for a time. At length both were consecrated on the same day, in the church of Rouen. His life was now distinguished by the same humility and good works. His pastoral efforts were successful in reclaiming many barbarous people from idolatry, which still had root among savage parts bordering on the sea. “He held a middle place between the rich and poor, so that the poor looked up to him as to a father, and the rich as to a superior, for he did not pay regard to the power of the person, but rather to the excellence of manners; and he honoured each man in proportion to the sanctity of his life. He thought it a personal loss if any poor person were relieved by any one else but himself, for he believed that he relieved Christ in the poor. Every day he taught the people committed to his charge, assembling them in the church, and speaking with the boldness of a prophet. “I beseech you, dearest brethren,” he used to say, “and admonish you with great humility, that you would hear me with attention, while I remind you of what is necessary for your salvation. Consider that I am bound to excite you without ceasing to remember the tremendous judgment of

God, and to desire the heavenly recompence, in order that with you I may deserve to rejoice in the perpetual peace of angels. Remember what a covenant you have made in baptism, and what are the articles of your faith, that your being called Christians, may not serve to your condemnation but to your remedy, for to that end you are made Christians, that you may always do the works of Christ, that is to say, that you should love chastity, fly from luxury and drunkenness, that you should hold to humility and detest pride, because our Lord Christ showed humility by example and taught it by his words, desiring you to learn of him who was meek and humble of heart, and saying that you would find rest unto your souls. Beware of envying: have charity to each other, and always think of the future life and of eternal happiness, and labour more for your soul than for your body, because the flesh will be but for a short time in the world, whereas the soul will either reign for ever in heaven, or else will burn eternally in hell. It is not, therefore, enough, dearest brethren, that you bear the Christian name, if you do not perform Christian works; for to him only is it of advantage to be called a Christian who always retains in his mind the precepts of Christ and perfects them in his work; who does not steal, does not bear false witness, does not commit adultery, hates no man but loves all men, and prays for his enemies and makes peace. He is a good Christian who places all his hope in Christ alone; who receives strangers joyfully as Christ himself, because he says, ‘I was a stranger, and you took me in;’ who washes their feet, and loves them as his dearest relations; who gives alms according to his ability, who comes frequently to the church, and offers his oblations at the altar of God; who has no false weights, who lends not his money on usury, who lives chastely, and who teaches his children and neighbours to live chastely in the fear of God, who reverences the holy solemnities of the church, that with a secure conscience he may approach to the altar of the Lord. Lo, brethren, this it is to be a good Christian. While you have time, therefore, bear in mind and fulfil the precepts of Christ, give alms, have peace and charity, prevent discord, fly falsehood, do not steal, offer oblations and tenths to the churches, and exhibit lights at the holy places, and see that your children live always in the fear of God; hallow

the Sunday, abstaining from all servile work through reverence for the resurrection of Christ, and celebrate the solemnities of the saints with pious affection, and, above all things have charity; be hospitable, be humble, casting all your care upon God, for he careth for you, visit the sick and the prisoners, receive strangers, feed the hungry, clothe the naked. Despise fortune-tellers and magicians, and beware above all things how you observe the sacrilegious customs of the Pagans, how you consult or interrogate for any cause the diviners or casters of nativities, because he who does this evil, immediately loses the sacrament of baptism. In like manner, attend not to omens, to sneezing, or to birds, or to what you meet when you first go out on your journey, but whether on a journey, or whatever you do, sign yourself in the name of Christ, and say the Creed and Pater-noster with faith and devotion, and then no enemy can hurt you. Let no Christian observe what day he goes out or returns home, because God has made all days; let no one attend to the day or to the moon for beginning any work; let no one practise the pagan buffooneries at the kalends of January, or believe in any charms, for they are diabolical works; let no one on the festival of St. John, or of any of the saints, observe the solstices, or dances, or diabolical songs, or invoke Neptune, Diana, or Minerva; let no one pass Thursday in idleness, or any day in May, or any day excepting Sundays and the festivals of the saints; let no Christian resort to the temples, or to rocks, or fountains, or trees, or to holes; let no one presume to hang round the neck of a man or animal any ligament, although it should be done by a clerk, and although it be said that it is a holy thing and contains divine readings, for there is not in it the remedy of Christ but the poison of the devil. Let no woman call upon Minerva in any work of weaving or dyeing, but in every work desire the grace of Christ, and trust in the virtue of his name. Let no one presume to cry out if the moon be crossed, or fear to begin any work at the new moon, for God made the moon to dispel the darkness of the night, not to stop the works of men or to make men mad, as some fools think, who being invaded by demons, ascribe what they suffer to the moon; but the sun and moon are the creatures of God, and serve to the necessities of men by his order. And let the sick have no re-

course to magicians, but let them trust in the sole mercy of God, and let them receive the eucharist of the body and blood of Christ with faith and devotion, and let them seek the blessed oil from the church, that their bodies may be anointed in the name of Christ, and that, according to the apostle, the prayer of faith may save them, and the Lord will raise them up, and will restore the health not only of their bodies but of their souls. Above all things, whether at home or on a journey, take heed that no shameful or luxurious words proceed from your mouths, and that you sing no songs of the Gentiles, and reject with all horror those inventions of the enemy, and exhibit veneration to no creature but only to God and to his saints. Make no similitude of feet which are placed at the meeting of two ways, but if you find them burn them with fire, and adore not the heavens, or the stars, or the earth, or any other creature, because God hath made and disposed them all. High, indeed, are the heavens, vast the earth, immense the sea, beautiful the stars, but more immense and more beautiful is He who created them; and if those things that we see are so incomprehensible, that is, the various fruits of the earth, the beauty of flowers, the diversity of fruits, the races of animals, the prudence of the bees, the winds and the dew, and the lightning, and the succession of the seasons, all which things no human mind can fully comprehend; if these things are such which we behold, what must be those heavenly things which have not yet been seen? or what their Maker whose hand created them, or by whose will they are all governed? Brethren, Him you must fear above all things, adore him, love him, hold to his mercy, and never despair of his goodness. Imitate the good and correct the wicked, and let him that hath sinned do penance from all his heart; for if he should die without penance, he will not go to redemption but to hell for ever. Let no one get drunk, or persuade another to drink more than is convenient. Every Sunday come together to the church, and pray for the peace of the church and for your own forgiveness. Judges, judge justly; receive not gifts, nor attend to persons. You who govern, and you who are governed, be grounded equally in the fear of God. Have Christ always in your mind, and his sign upon your forehead. You have many adversaries who hasten to prevent your course, and therefore, in every

place and every hour, arm yourselves with the sign of the cross, for this alone is what they fear. Moreover the sign of Christ is a great thing, and the cross of Christ; but it is only of advantage to those who keep the commands of Christ. Therefore, see that you keep them with all your strength, and whether you sit or walk, or eat, or ascend your bed, or rise from it, let the sign of Christ guard your forehead, and the memory of God always protect you. And when you shall fulfil all these things with the divine aid, know ye that the devil will be grieved, and perhaps will send some evil or infirmity to you, but do not despair, for God permits this to prove you, and therefore bless him for ever; and if once or twice you resist manfully, he will never permit the devil again to tempt you. And wonder not if even these diviners should foretel the truth, for he can easily foresee the future, and the divine scripture says ‘*Etiam si vera dixerint vobis, nolite credere eis**’; but nothing can hurt you beyond what God permits, and he permits only that he may either prove the just or correct the sinner. As for the poor, be bountiful in your alms to them; give money and purchase everlasting life. He that hath gold let him give gold, he that hath silver, silver; but he that hath no money, with a good mind let him give a mouthful to the poor, for no poor man can dispense himself from giving alms, since a cup of cold water is to have its reward. God might make all men rich, but he wished that there should be poor, that the rich might redeem their sins. Redeem yourselves while you live, because after death no one can redeem you. Let every one give the tenth of his substance to the poor or to the churches, for God is worthy to receive this at our hands. If any poor should die of hunger and you have not given, you will be their murderers. And do not choose to whom you will show mercy, lest perchance you should pass over him who deserves to receive it, because you know not in whom Christ may come to you. Do this that it may be well with you, and that God may bless you. Remember these things always; tell them to your children and to your neighbours, when you sit in your houses and when you walk by the way. Consider what the blessed John the apostle says, ‘*Novissima hora est.*’ Therefore love

* Deut. xiii.

not the world, because it will soon pass and its concupiscence with it; but do the will of God that you may remain for ever, that you may have confidence when he shall appear, and that you may not be confounded at his advent. Consider, I entreat you, therefore, what a destructive thing it is to do the works of the devil and to be partakers of his punishment. If any man sin let him not rest in deadly security; let him do penance. Let him that was proud be humble, that was an adulterer be chaste, that was a thief be now a dispenser of his own goods to the churches and to the poor; he that was envious, let him be benign; he that was drunken, let him be sober; he that was choleric, let him be patient; he that hath injured another, let him ask pardon; and he that hath been injured, let him pardon, for let no one deceive you; for if he should hold one man in the world in enmity, whatever good works he may offer to God, he loses them all, for the apostle does not lie, terribly exclaiming, ‘He that hateth his brother is a murderer and a liar, and walketh in darkness;’ and by brother every man is meant, for we are all brethren in Christ. So then, brethren, run while you have light, before the darkness shall come upon you; while you labour for the flesh, labour also for the spirit. When you fast, give what you would have eaten to the poor, and remember that what your body is when it goes without food for a long time, that your soul is when deprived for any considerable time of hearing the word of God. Let each man love his wife without dissimulation, but as for concubines, either before or after marriage, whoever is thus guilty, deserves to be cut off from the society of Christians, and without penance will burn without remedy in eternal flames; for what is unlawful for women, is equally so for men. Therefore, Christian soul, take heed. Watch, pray, and beware of these crimes. Open your hand to the poor, that Christ may open his door to you, and that you may enter into the joys of paradise. Amend your lives, and then you will never despair of pardon, whatever sins you may have committed. Despair is greater than all sins, therefore never despair of God’s mercy, neither after the hundredth time of sinning, nor after the thousandth, for there is no sin so grievous but there is pardon for it by penance. Despise no one,—no poor man, no slave,—because perhaps he is better than you before God, and because we

are all one in Christ Jesus. The Lord not only admonishes us, but with ineffable goodness entreats us to be converted to him. Let us hear him now, when he asks us, lest otherwise he should not hear us when he shall come to judgment. Be separated then from the devil, and joined to God who hath redeemed you, and place all your hope in the mercy of Christ, and guard your souls, not only from a shameful act, but also from every base thought; because the Lord God is a just judge, and will judge the thoughts of the heart. Abstain altogether from swearing, and beware that you give not scandal to any man. Bear ye one another's burdens, and so you will fulfil the law of Christ. Watch carefully, because the nearer that the world shall approach to its end, the more cruelly will the devil rage against Christians; knowing that he is soon to be condemned, and that he may multiply his companions. Take heed, therefore, and know that each of you has an angel of God who watches over you continually, and if you do well you rejoice him, and if evil you drive him from you, and make place for a malignant demon. Look well, therefore, into yourselves, and see whether you have minds corresponding with angelic purity; and if you see that you are good, never presume upon your merits with a proud mind, but rather so much the more take heed with humility. And have a horror of all excess in eating and drinking, which leads to other sins; and this I say, not that I should ascribe evil to the creature of God, but that I should render you more sober and cautious. Nay, I admonish you, that you never call any creature of God evil, for whatever seems evil to us, is evil not from its own nature but from our sins. Beware of the broad way which leadeth to destruction, follow the narrow by which eternal happiness is found. When you have a feast call the poor and the stranger, for it is not just that, in a Christian people, some should be inflated while others are in danger of perishing through hunger. Wherefore should not the poor man partake of your meat, who is to enjoy along with you the society of angels? Wherefore should he not receive one tunic, who is alike to receive the stole of immortality? So live, then, that when you depart hence, and your flesh shall be devoured by worms in the tomb, your soul, adorned with good works, may rejoice with the saints in heaven. Behold, a little while and the world

shall cease, and all visible things shall pass away like a cloud, or like the evening shadow. Therefore, love not the world, which thus declines to its end, especially since the apostle declares that its friendship is enmity with God. Love, therefore, eternal life, and hasten there, where you will live for ever, and never fear to die. If you so love this miserable and flowing life, where you live with such labour, and where by running, and searching, and sighing, you can scarcely satisfy the necessities of the body, how much more ought you to love the eternal life, where you will have no labour to endure, where you will enjoy the utmost security, and happiness, and freedom, and where men will be like the angels, not in substance but in beatitude ; and where the just shall shine as the sun in the kingdom of their Father ? What do you think will be the splendour of souls when the light of bodies will have the brightness of the sun ? There will be no sorrow, no fear, no death, no malice, no want, no terror of barbarians or of torture, no hunger, no thirst, no cold, no heat, no temptation of the enemy, no wish to sin, no possibility of falling ; but men and angels will enjoy a perpetual spring in felicity and peace, and amidst the splendours of an endless solemnity. Therefore, brethren, let us not serve sin and lose this happiness which is prepared in heaven, but let us regard ourselves as strangers upon earth, that we may hasten with more speed there ; for all things that are seen will quickly pass away, quickly like a shadow.

“ See, then, dearly beloved, I have set this before you with simplicity, that each of you may know what is to become of him. No one can now plead ignorance, since you have heard of life and death, the punishment of the wicked, and the glory of the just. It remains for you to choose which you will have. Defer not, then, your conversion. Let him that is bound with the chain of his sins rise up now quickly, and awake from the sleep of death. Let him haste to confession and do penance, nor let him blush, for it is better to have shame here for a little time, than to endure the punishment for so many millions of ages. If he be penitent from his heart, the Redeemer will soon raise him up, for he raised up Lazarus after he had been four days dead and was now stinking ; for he willeth not the death of a sinner, but that he should be converted and live. And besides, see now

what evils daily press upon us, indicating that the end of the world is at hand. Nothing remains, then, but alone the day of God's judgment, and the coming of the terrible antichrist. Behold war upon war, tribulation upon tribulation, famine upon famine, pestilence upon pestilence, and nation rising up against nation. Why have we breasts of stone and iron, that we should not think for the remedy of our souls among so many evils! Beloved, I admonish you, as the world seems coming to an end, so let human malice. We cannot have both Christ and the world for our portion. And, above all, let us love God, for it is impious not to love him who descended from the seat of paternal majesty to save undeserving men. Have charity, which is the bond of unity; have charity, and you will have all virtues. As far as in us lies, let us keep all the precepts of God; and let us hasten where death will not be feared, and where all the saints are waiting and desiring to receive and behold us; where Christ our celestial King and the angels, the heavenly citizens, are expecting us with outstretched arms. O, then, I say, let us hasten where we shall live for ever, and be joined to the angelic host, and delivered from all contagion of sin, our Lord Jesus Christ presiding with God the Father and the Holy Ghost, who liveth and reigneth for ever and ever. Amen*."

With such familiar instructions he daily taught the people: he did not prefer a rich man to a poor man, nor a prince or noble to a mean person, but on the contrary he appeared more austere to the former, while he evinced great modesty to the others: his servants, too, were treated by him with the utmost benignity, and not after the manner of master and servant; he was strong to execute all tolerance, and mild to bear injuries. Thus did he exercise himself in every labour, and at length when he was old and past his seventieth year, perceiving the dissolution of his body to be near at hand, one day walking with his disciples in the city of Noyon, and casting his eyes by chance, he saw that part of the wall of the front of the Basilica of St. Medard was crumbling to

* This was the sermon from which a garbled extract was adduced in evidence, by modern English historians, to prove that in the middle ages the clergy taught that nothing was required to make a good Christian but the punctual payment of tithes.

decay, and immediately ordered workmen to be employed in strengthening it with ligaments ; and his disciples saying it would be better to wait until it might be more solidly repaired, he replied, “ Let it be done now while I remain, lest otherwise it be never done.” At this word they were troubled, and said, “ May it not happen to your servants to behold what you say ; but may the Lord permit you to remain long with us to be the ornament of the church and the guardian of the poor ;” but he, looking up to heaven and sighing, said, “ Not your will but God’s will be done in me. Be not cast down, my sons, but rather rejoice and congratulate me, because long ago I desired this time to arrive.” Thus ended their conversation for that day. Shortly after he was seized with a fever, and then he knew that he was to die, and so he assembled all his servants and ministers, and exhorted them as usual to follow peace and to keep the bond of unity. Still he continued to perform all his usual exercises, and he spent his nights in prayer and watching. On the day preceding the kalends of December, he again assembled all his servants and disciples, and thus spoke to them :—
“ Dearly beloved, hear my last sentences. If you have ever loved me strive to fulfil the divine law ; always breathe Jesus, and fix his precepts in your minds. If you ever loved me, love the name of Christ as I have done ; fear always the tremendous judgment of God, for I, according to the language of the Scriptures, am going the way of all the earth ; and now I desire to be dissolved, and if it shall please the Lord, in peace. Behold this day I commend to your hands the salvation of your souls, and keep me in memory, for Eligius departs and will be no longer with you in this world.” All that stood round him wept and lamented, which the pious pastor perceiving, suffered his tears to flow, rejoicing for himself, but having compassion on those that he was to leave. At length resuming his discourse, he continued, “ Do not lament, and do not distress me with your weeping, for if you were truly wise you would rejoice, and not grieve ; for though absent in body, I shall be present in spirit ; and though it should be otherwise, yet God is always present with you, and to him I commend you.” It was now the close of the day, and he fell upon his knees on the ground, and besought God that he would provide a pastor for his people who should

rule them with modesty, for to the last his only care was for others ; and now, as the cold of death spread over him, he called all his disciples and companions, and embraced them, and wished them farewell, saying, “ I cannot speak to you any longer, and you will see my face no more. Therefore farewell in peace—and suffer me now to rest, and permit my material part to return to its parent earth.” Then after a pause, with suppliant eyes raised to heaven, he prayed in silence, and at length burst out, saying, “ Nunc dimittis servum tuum, Domine, secundum verbum tuum in pace :” remember that thou didst form me from the clay—and enter not into judgment with thy servant ; for in thy sight shall no man living be justified ;” and then after a little, he added, “ O Christ, Redeemer of the world, who alone art without sin, remember me—and leading me from the body of this death, save me in thy heavenly kingdom : thou wert always my protector—‘ In manus tuas commendo spiritum meum.’ I know that I do not deserve to behold thy face ; yet thou knowest that always my hope was in thy mercy, my faith in thy goodness, and now with the confession of thy name, O Christ, I breathe my last sigh. Receive me then according to thy great mercy ; open to me the gates of life, and let not the prince of darkness meet me, nor the powers of the air disturb me, but stretch forth thy hand and lead me into the place of refreshment which thou hast prepared for thy servants.” With these words his spirit departed at the first hour of the night ; his body placed upon a bier was borne into the church, and there the clergy in turn sung the hymns, while the people lamented, and spent the night in watching. Early the next morning the queen Bathilde, with her daughters, and many princes, came to the town, and bitterly lamented that they had not arrived in time to find the holy man alive. Then after a general fast of three days the funeral was marshalled, and though it was the winter season, no persuasions could detain the devout queen from following the bier on foot with all her family ; and so amidst the tears and groans of the poor and all the people, and of the monks who came from all parts, the holy bishop was carried to his grave *. The discourse of Eligius, and the

* Vita S. Eligii. B. Audœni Episcop. Auct. apud Dacher. Spicileg. tom. V.

conclusion of his life, hath detained us, reader: but the influence which yet lives in these words of heaven, with Apostolic radiance compassed, will compensate the brief delay. It is not for my lips to comment such a teacher. With fear and reverence mute let us pass on.

Profane historians have occasion repeatedly to mention the preachers of the middle ages, and to record instances of the great effects resulting from their zeal. It is related of S. Edmund, archbishop of Canterbury, that in preaching he seemed to possess the tongue of an angel, so that no one by description could give an idea of the grace and sweetness of his discourse. A multitude of clerks and laics after hearing him commenced a new life, and studied to embrace a holy conversation, and to adhere wholly and for ever to God. A noble woman, Ela, countess of Salisbury, persuaded her husband William Long-sword to hear him. The count had lived a worldly life, without any thought for a long time of confession, and of receiving the body of Christ according to the manner of the universal church. The words and the very countenance of Edmund had such an impression upon him, that he changed his life and became totally a new man: he confessed his sins to a hermit to whom Edmund referred him, and with due reverence received the holy eucharist. Edmund in preaching used to hold a crucifix in his hand, beholding which he would weep and smile—weep to think, as he said, that there were many hearers and so few doers of the word, while they had the passion of Christ before their eyes, and the example of the saints—and smile when he regarded the cross with pious eyes, and thought upon the benefits which it had conferred upon the whole world *.

Robert canon of St. Marien d'Auxerre and Jacques de Vitry, describe a contemporary priest, Foulques, who went about as a missionary, preaching penance and conversion to God, through France, Flanders, and Burgundy, and working great reformation among usurers and persons of profligate character, being in age a young man, but in science and in manners most eminent. All the people used to call him “the holy man.” Pierre Chantre in the year 1180, wishing to give Foulques, who had

* Vita S. Edmundi, apud Martene Thesaur. Anecdot. tom. III.

been his disciple, an opportunity of exerting his talents, caused him to preach in his presence, and before many learned men in the church of St Severin at Paris. Jacques de Vitry says, "that God gave such a blessing to his sermons, although they were in a very simple style, that even all the learned philosophers of Paris used to excite each other to come and hear the priest Foulques, who preached, said they, like a second St. Paul. They used even to bring tablets with them in order to write down his words *." Foulques died young in the year 1201, being curate of Neuilly sur Marne †. Many eminent preachers followed in his steps, among whom were Peter Chantre, Robert de Cuthon, Walter of London, Stephen Langton, archbishop of Canterbury, John de Nivelle, and Eustache, abbot of Flay.

The journal of the reign of Charles VII. records that in the year 1429, at Boulogne, near Paris, brother Richard, a Franciscan, being lately returned from Jerusalem, made so affecting a sermon, that on the return of the people to Paris there were seen more than an hundred fires, in which men burned tables, cards, and billiards, while women burned extravagant pompous ornaments, with which they used to adorn their heads ‡. This holy friar used to preach also in the cemetery of the holy Innocents, to the infinite admiration of the people. His sermons used generally to last six hours §. In general, however, the sermons of the middle ages were not prolix. "A tedious sermon," says Guibert de Nogent, "only causes anger. What was good in it is forgotten, and men go away feeling only aversion ||." St. Francis expressly directed his friars in preaching to use brevity of discourse, because a short word will the Lord make upon the earth. Whatever faults may have been committed by the Florentines at the time of the preaching of Friar Jerome, however justly Petrus Delphinus may have accused him of imprudence ¶, still a spirit of great piety seems to have characterised the measure which Pignotti

* Bulæus, *Hist. Universit. Paris*, tom. II.

† Lebeuf, *Hist. du Diocèse de Paris*, tom. I. c. 4.

‡ Ibid. tom. III. 23.

§ Pasquier, *Recherches de la France*, Lib. VI. 39.

|| Lib. quo ordine sermo fieri debeat.

¶ Annal. Camaldul. Lib. LXVIII.

stigmatises as a sacred farce. At the instigation of the friars, during the carnival a numerous flock of children, appointing deputies for every quarter, went in humility and devotion to all the houses, asking for the anatheme, or all that was profane, such as obscene pictures and books, which were freely granted to them, whilst the devout female sex, yielding humbly to these innocent preachers, suffered themselves to be despoiled of the dearest ornaments of personal decoration, and of every thing that had been invented to give a false appearance to beauty. On the last day of the carnival, after having heard mass, clothed in white, carrying on their heads garlands of olive, and red crosses in their hands, they proceeded, singing psalms, to the Piazzo dei Signori, where a pyramidal scaffold had been erected, upon which these instruments of pleasure and profane luxury were deposited. The children mounted the rostrum, and after having sung spiritual hymns, the four deputies came down with lighted torches, and set fire to the pile, which was consumed amidst the voices of joy and the sound of trumpets. It was this fire which make fools the rich who now collect the first editions of Boccacio. While Savonarola confined his preaching to the reformation of manners, he did but adopt the style of the middle ages, which he defended with great power against the sophists, who despised it. "They love not the sacred Scriptures," he exclaims, "they understand them not, they taste them not. Our soul, we hear them say, is weary of this light bread—let us have the eloquence of Cicero, the verses of poets, the subtle sentences of Aristotle. Preach to us subtle things *." Certainly one may derive a great insight into the character of such men as John Picus of Mirandola, Hermolaus Barbarus, Marcilius Ficinus, Lorenzo de Medici, and Angelo Politian, from the one fact that Savonarola, while he merely announced the word of God with boldness, was their favourite companion, and the preacher whom they heard with the greatest respect and admiration. They beheld not in him one who might forget the precept of Christ, and make no distinction between the chair and him who sat thereon: and after all, who that has ever heard the issue should presume to condemn a man dear to Philip Neri and Cathe-

* De Simplicitate Vitæ Christianæ, Lib. I.

rine Ricci whom holy church hath canonised, to whom the offering of prayer as to a saint seems to have been sanctioned by the thirteenth Benedict, and whose memory Paul the fourth hath solemnly absolved? Politically their antagonist, the Medicæan princes revered in him the minister of the Most High, and John Francis of Mirandola observes, that not even the enemies of that friar ever dared to question the integrity and sanctity of his life and manners *. Even when expressions seem to indicate that somewhat of human eloquence was sought for in the pulpit, the description of preachers at that time would lead one to form a very high idea of their merit. Angelo Politian in a letter to Tristan Chalcus, confesses that when he first went to hear Marianus Genazaensis preach, he went as if to explore and with little respect, but when he saw the habit of the man, and state, and as it were the nature in his eyes, and the countenance no way vulgar, he began to expect what was in fact the result. "Lo then he begins to speak," saith he, "I stretch out my ears, I hear a sonorous voice, choice words, grand sentences: I am already caught—he proceeds—he is stopped by nothing, there is nothing that wants a termination: he argues, I am ensnared; he adds little narrations, I am led away; he modulates a verse, I am captive; he even jests, I laugh; he presses, he urges, I give him my hands; he tries the milder affections, immediately my tears steal down; he cries out in anger, I am terrified, and I repent having come. I confess for my part he seems in the pulpit to surpass himself, and frequently even the measure of man. While I contemplate, too, all this in detail, I fancy that after a while, when the novelty is over, he will less affect me; but the contrary is the fact, for the next day I hear him as if he were a new man, only better than he appeared the day before, when he seemed to have attained perfection. Nor would you despise that little body, so unconquerable and indefatigable, which seems to repair its strength by fresh labour. Moreover, when I went into the country, I lived familiarly with him in the same house, and I never saw any one more placid and more cautious; his severity would not intimidate, yet his facility would not corrupt you. Only in the pulpit he shows the censor; when he

* J. F. Pic. de Studio Divin. et Hum. Scientiæ, I. 27.

descends he is all civility, so that when he is with Picus of Mirandola, and me, we find no remedy so effectual as his conversation against the sadness of literary labour. Lorenzo de Medici himself, an acute observer of dispositions, prefers a little walk with him to all the recreations of a city life. Only examine the man near, and you will praise the judgment of your Politian. You will find a man who is never troublesome, and who is incapable of giving offence *.”

William of Malmesbury relates that St. Wolstan, when a monk at Worcester used to give himself up wholly to spiritual discipline, and that although rude as to secular science, he was, nevertheless, considered one of the most eloquent preachers in the English tongue; of which there was a remarkable proof given by the citizens of Bristol: for when neither the royal nor the pontifical power could deter them from the nefarious trade of native slaves, this holy preacher by constant sermons, reduced them to a more sound mind †. A learned Dane who has lately visited our shores, expresses admiration at the merit of the Anglo-Saxon homilies. “ I have felt,” he says, “ a high degree of interest in looking into this mirror of Anglo-Saxon divinity, and I doubt not that many an individual on reading these sermons, would form quite another idea of the Anglo-Saxon clergy, than he has imbibed from the current representations of them in our civil and ecclesiastical histories.” Noel Deslandes, bishop of Tre-guier in the sixteenth century, was endowed with such extraordinary powers of persuasion, that the churches could not contain the crowds which assembled to hear his sermons, so that stages used to be erected outside before the windows of cathedrals, upon which auditors were placed. At the consecration of the church at Ferentinum in the year 1191, the almost incredible admiration of the people on hearing the subtle sermon of Cardinal Jordan, is attested by history ‡. Scarcely had the barefooted Carmelite father Peter made one sermon in Naples, when a change began to appear in the manners of the people. That vast capital became penitent Nineveh. The most desperate sinners, hearing the thunder which came from

* Angelo Politian, Epist. Lib. IV.

† Guil. Malmes. in vita ejus Ang. Sac. tom. II.

‡ Italia Sacra, I.

his mouth, shed torrents of tears, and changed their lives, so great was the force of his preaching, joined with the sanctity of his life. In like manner, the sermons of the Archbishop of Granada, in the last century, induced multitudes of Spaniards to renounce the custom of carrying poignards. But if we discover in history that such great excellence, and such prodigious effects, belonged to the preaching of men who were otherwise obscure, what must we conclude respecting the merits and influence of the eminent doctors who have left even upon earth an imperishable renown? "In the midst of the church he opened his mouth; and the Lord filled him with the spirit of wisdom and understanding, and clothed him with a stole of glory." This is what the church sings at the commemoration of her canonized teachers, and history, in reference to each, confirms the attestation. Who could enumerate the multitudes that were melted into love and obedience by the meek and gentle flow of that wondrous source of living justice which Citeaux's cloister furnished in the person of her Bernard? And still let us keep in mind that all the great preachers of whom we read had been formed by the example and instruction of others whose renown hath perished. It was by hearing the sermon of Jordan, general of the Dominicans, that Albert the Great was moved to enter immediately that order. "Greece," exclaims St. Gregory of Tours, "was happy, which deserved to hear Paul preaching; but Gaul is not forsaken by Christ, to whom the Lord vouchsafes a Martin *." St. Romuald in preaching was said to resemble one of the seraphs, for he burned with a flame of divine love, and kindled those who heard him. Wherever he went to preach, discords were appeased, the poor liberally assisted, the manners and conversation of men reformed. All justice followed works of penance, works of mercy †. No one could ever hear St. Bonaventura preach without loving and venerating him, such a celestial charity was diffused by his very looks. The learned Ambrosius Camaldulensis speaks in admiration of the eloquence of St. Bernardin of Sienna, to whom he writes, on hearing that it is in contemplation to raise him to the episcopal office, apprising him of the universal alarm which the report has

* Lib. Mirac. de Martini, cap. I.

† Annalium Camaldul. Lib. VII.

produced, lest that dignity should cause an interruption to his sermons, and diminish the effect of his preaching. He styles him the admirable trumpet of Jesus Christ, our Lord, the defender and preacher of poverty, whose cry smites the proudest summits. He speaks of his friend who heard him preach at Rome; and who describes that inexhaustible and immortal flood of divine eloquence always increasing in magnificence from the sweet lips of brother Bernardine, who, with the eloquence of the holy Scriptures, and the omnipotence of the most victorious name of Jesus, had led such multitudes of the highest and lowest degrees from the darkness of ignorance, and the sea of all vices, to embrace with the purest devotion the worship of that most holy name *. His fears were groundless; for though many cities sought Bernardine for their chair, he declared that he would never lay aside the habit and poverty of St. Francis. So that he is represented in painting with three mitres at his feet, to signify his refusal of Sienna, Ferrara, and Milan. When this holy friar first came to Milan, his name was hardly known. Maffaeus Veggius says, "When I was a boy about twelve years old, I remember seeing him, and hearing him preach to the people, before he was so celebrated; for I had a grammar master, the best of old men, who loved to hear him, and on festival days he would always go, and lead with him some of his favourite scholars, among whom I was. He used often to say to us, 'Let us go, boys, to hear that good friar clad in so poor a habit, but with such grace upon his tongue.' He constantly affirmed that he had never heard any one like him. Trusting to my master's judgment, and not to my own, which was not prodigious, as you may suppose, at that tender age, I revered the man, and listened to him most attentively, though I could hardly appreciate the weight and majesty of his grave sentences; but as I believed him to be such as my master judged, all that he said seemed to me to issue from a divine mouth. While thus preaching daily to the people, he was known only to a few of the learned; but by degrees he began to attract general attention, and at the close of his Lent sermons, so well was he appreciated, that from that time nothing was more illustrious than the name of Bernardine. It was wonderful to behold the

* Annal. Camaldulens. Lib. LX.

crowds that flocked to hear him, and that were converted by him. They ran to the church like ants, and there were not priests enough to hear their confessions, and administer the sacraments. In one year the number of communions equalled that of ten ordinary years. Marvellous too, it was to see such numbers of young nobles educated in the utmost delicacy and splendour, now voluntarily seeking the humiliation of the minors, and exchanging profane for holy songs.” The preaching of this holy friar was celebrated, not only in Italy, but throughout the world. Copies of his sermons were disseminated through Spain, France, the British Islands, Germany, Hungary, Cyprus, the coast of Asia, Greece, and through many oriental nations. Robbery on the highways, piracy at sea, faction, that had imbued with blood the streets of cities, superstitions and cruelties worthy of Gentiles, profanation and utter neglect of the festivals, the disuse of prayer, and of assisting at mass, atrocious spectacles, all the horrors and desolations which were the seeds of the heresy of the sixteenth century, yielded to his voice. Through this perishing world did he walk, preaching Jesus and the resurrection to judgment, nor was he otherwise received than as an apostle of Christ. The crowds used to assemble at break of day, many coming from a distance of thirty miles to hear him, as if they believed that the Holy Ghost would descend upon them as formerly upon those who believed on hearing the apostles. No one could describe the fruits which followed his preaching, nor tell how many cities and individuals laid aside enmity for peace, how many licentious youths were reclaimed to a holy life, how many dissipated women were prevailed on to renounce the ways of vanity ; restitution, to the amount sometimes of a thousand gold ducats, used to be made ; tables for play, and other instruments of dissipation, used to be brought to him, and thrown into the flames, while new hospitals and convents marked every way on which he had passed *. “ O how many lucrative, but sinful kinds of commerce, were renounced !” cries one who had heard him ; “ how many impositions in buying and selling, how many perjuries and deceptions at an end ! How many sons rendered dutiful to their parents ; how many parents careful of

* Wad. Ann. Minorum, Vol. IX. and X.

their children ; how many married persons re-united in love and fidelity, how many masters made gentle, how many servants faithful, how many of all classes restored to wisdom, and to the peaceful port of blessed religion ! If antiquity extolled Pythagoras for having reformed one city, what praise is due to him who imbued with such superior doctrines innumerable multitudes of people in every state of Italy ? At Bologna, he preached from the steps of St. Petronio, and dice-tables were thrown into a vast fire made in the centre of the square. An artizan soon afterwards complained that he could paint nothing else, and that with these he had before supported his family, to whom Bernardine replied, “ If you can paint nothing else, paint this figure,” and making a circle, he formed a sun within it, and in the centre he wrote the name of Jesus, which we can now see under the porch of the good Jesus, with the effigy of the saint. Then the people being directed by Bernardine, came to purchase these new tables, and the man drew more profit than before. A table of this kind, on which the holy name was painted within rays of gold, he used to hold in his hand while preaching, and present it from time to time to the people. Inflamed by his sermons at Florence, after a public supplication, the people erected a vast stone in the square of Santa Croce, on which was inscribed the name of Jesus. It was thus that they replied to the enemies of the holy man, who accused him of extravagance in adopting this manner of expressing veneration for the sacred name. At Sienna, also, after a public solemnity, the magistrates of the city, and clergy, decreed public honours to this tablet, and had it beautifully painted in the characters proposed by Bernardine on the city hall. The fruits of St. Bernardine’s preaching were gathered in many cities of Italy long after he had passed from the world, as Robert de Lycio testifies. Several celebrated preachers, however, succeeded him, who were supposed to have imitated his style. John de Capistrano was followed by such multitudes, that it was always necessary in passing through the crowd, to protect him with guards, or torch-bearers, lest he should be suffocated. During forty years from his entering the order of Minors, till the end of his life, he preached constantly to faithful and infidels, the Lord co-operating and confirming his word with signs following. To hear the sermons of Bernardine of Monte

Feltro, cities and princes contended with each other. After preaching for some time in Venice, he was about to depart to Padua, to preach there during the Lent of 1477, but the Venetians entreated Vendramino, the doge, to detain him, which he endeavoured to do; but the friar replied that he must obey his superiors, and so, during a tempestuous night, he left Venice, while the authorities were preparing to elude the mandate of his superiors, by obtaining letters from Pope Sixtus, ordering him to remain. Again, in 1485, after preaching with great fruit at Parma, in the cathedral, at the end of the year being ordered, by pontifical letters from Innocent VIII., to preach at Bologna, the citizens of Parma applied to the duke of Milan, to request that he would prevent his leaving them. The prefect of the city issued an ordinance to forbid his departure. After some delay, he obtained leave to go to the neighbouring convent of his order, and thence he effected his escape during the night, and taking desert mountain ways, succeeded in pursuing his journey safe to the appointed city. The next year, he again preached the Lent at Parma, and before its expiration he received an invitation from the Florentines, who entreated that he would preach the Lent in the following year at Florence. On leaving Padua in 1492, he received deputies from the magistrates of Bassano, Cittadello, Castra Nuova, Novalis, and Asoli, entreating that he would preach at least once in their respective towns. While he was at Florence in 1493, application was made to the vicar general to order him to preach at so many different places that it was impossible to satisfy them in one year. He was demanded by Brixen, Milan, Ravenna, Perugia, Assisium, Spoleto, Messana, and Palermo. The Spanish ambassador came to him with much reverence, and entreated that he would pass into Spain, where the seeds of sacred doctrine, he said, would yield an abundant harvest. In 1494 he was detained at Mantua, through the indecision of the vicar general, who was perplexed with the multitude of claims respecting him. How many noble cities contended for him! What a sensation in the Roman court! What an emulation among great princes to obtain a sight of one little, humble friar, and have him for a corrector of their manners! Many interesting details are given respecting the enthusiasm with which he was every where received. When he preached at Mantua, not only all the citizens,

but all the people within twelve miles of the surrounding country came to hear him, in presence of whom he boldly admonished the marquis Frederic, on account of the injustice and neglect of his government: all trembled for him, but the prince replied to his courtiers, that the friar had done his duty, and that he wished others might follow his example. When he travelled he found it almost always necessary to set out during the night to avoid the multitude that would follow him; and from Aquilæa, though he departed at midnight, he was attended by vast crowds, from which he could not escape. Sometimes, as at Brixon, he left his companions in the city to conceal more effectually his departure. In 1492, as he approached Castel Franco, the governor of the city, with the chief men, came out to the distance of four miles to meet him, and with the greatest joy led him into the city. When he returned to Monte Feltro, his fellow citizens prepared him a triumphal entry. The houses were all hung with tapestry, and the streets adorned with garlands. The town was completely filled with the multitude. The inns did not suffice, and many passed the night in the churches and under the porticoes. The people left the neighbouring towns in such numbers, that the magistrates, fearing lest they should be wholly deserted, and so become a prey to the enemy, for the Germans and Venetians were then at war, issued a decree forbidding more than three hundred persons to leave any town at a time. Even the Germans, though but little acquainted with Italian, used to come to his sermons; but these were only admitted for the day, and at night a herald commanded them to leave the city, their wives and children, however, being permitted to sleep in the public porches, the prætor giving them guards, lest they should suffer any injury during the night. At the festival of St. Bernardine of Sienna, a storm came on during his sermon, and as the awning with which the whole market-place was covered became agitated, the people had no shelter from the wind and rain. Through pity for them, he sought twice or thrice to finish his sermon, but each time the whole assembly exclaimed that he should continue, and during a tempest of two hours they heard him preach. Another time, leaving Cremona to preach on the Sunday at Lodi, more than two thousand persons set off before him, and travelled all night. When the inhabitants of that town rose early in the morning, and came to the forum, the seats which

they had prepared for themselves for the occasion, were already occupied by the people of Cremona, whose zeal filled them with admiration. In 1493 being ordered to proceed to Aretium, to repress the tumultuous populace, he left Florence secretly, according to his custom ; but yet he could not prevent many nobles, doctors, and religious men, from following him. Leaving Ponte Levano about midnight, he found more than four hundred persons waiting outside the gates to hear him preach. Unwilling to disappoint them, he said mass before break of day, and then from the altar preached for one hour. At Padua, preaching on the festival of St. Anthony, the magistrates appointed a certain painter to delineate him as he stood in the pulpit. Approaching Clarina, a grammarian with his scholars came to meet him. and recited certain verses in his praise, whom he exhorted to instruct youth in Christian manners and piety. Would you hear now what were the fruits of his apostolic labours ? On these history is not silent. After leaving Parma in 1486, on arriving at Modena, when about to send back the guide, lo, he beheld this youth at his feet, offering him the horse which had carried his books. “ O man of God,” said he, “ I owe thee greater things than this horse ; for it has been owing to your words of fire that two debtors of my late father, whose debts were wholly unknown to me, and of which he made no mention in his will, have come to our house, bringing with them the entire sums which they owed to him, in consequence of which I have risen from a wretched to a happy condition.” Such were every where the results of his sermons. In 1493 the inhabitants of Pavia were filled with astonishment at their own reformation. “ Lo,” said they, “ that usurer ! how liberal he is now to the poor ! that intemperate youth, how he curbs his concupiscence ! how retired and bashful is become that immodest woman ! how many are recalled from evil arts and vanity ! ” The magistrates observing the effects, published a decree, ordering that all shops should be closed while he was preaching ; but he objected to this measure, and persuaded them to withdraw it, and from that time no shop was left open. Here he burnt in one fire objects to the value of two thousand pieces of gold. At his sermons in Sienna, Modena, Parma, and other places, he committed to the flames what were termed castles of Satan, immense piles composed of prohibited

books, vain ornaments, cards, and tables. He burnt, at Perugia, books of magic, necromancy, and evil arts, to which that people were addicted, and at Brixon the novels of Boccacio. He also persuaded scholastic preceptors in various places to cease from explaining Martial's epigrams, Ovid's amatory poetry, Petronius, and other such authors. On leaving Pavia, the citizens erected a new pulpit in the square near the cathedral, on the spot where he had preached. On this they placed his image, under which were inscribed these words, which he used frequently to repeat, "Nolite diligere mundum." On coming to Florence in 1493, Peter de Medicis and the senate had taken alarm, and he was forbidden to preach within the city. When leave was at length granted, he preached in the great square, which was not large enough to contain the multitude, so that the people occupied the roofs and windows of the houses, anxious at least to behold his gestures from a distance. On the following day, many relations of those who had subscribed the edict for expelling him the Florentine state, came and sought his forgiveness, and implored his benediction for themselves and their families. At Florence he preached every day. In his sermon he spared no abuse, and feared no power. At Padua he preached against timid or corrupt judges, who were moved either by fear or gifts. In 1492, at Viglevano, he preached in the Franciscan church, in presence of Lewis Sforza, duke of Milan, and Beatrice of Este, his wife, and all their ministers ; he showed what were the duties of the prince, the proper stipends of ministers, the necessity of paying the debts of creditors, which were then one source of great complaint, and the duty of honouring blessed Mary, towards whom that court had long been noted for its irreverence. On descending, the duke publicly thanked him, and within two days he paid all his debts even to the last farthing, and moreover decreed that in future the dukes of Milan should always celebrate the festival of the immaculate conception, in the church of St. Francis, at Milan, and after the office, distribute great alms to the poor. In 1493, he consoled by his sermons the afflicted and humiliated citizens of Perugia, inveighing against tyranny, hatred, and murder, introducing the persons of the ancient tyrants, Domitian, Nero, Leo, and Dionysius. At these sermons, Guido Ballionus, head of the chief faction, sat always opposite

the pulpit, that his presence might intimidate him ; but Bernardine was so little daunted, that he kept his eyes fixed on him, while at his look the tyrant turned pale, and betrayed the utmost internal anxiety. At Vicenza he repressed, with a divine power, the vanities of the carnival, so that the impatient youth was persuaded to relinquish its accustomed, and ardently expected amusements ; but here the vein which he had ruptured shortly before, when preaching in the town of St. Cassian, again burst, and from that time his dissolution approached rapidly, while he was obliged by physicians to refrain from all exertion during short intervals. At his last sermon, before leaving Padua, he seemed to foresee that he was never to return there. Weak and suffering, he was received into Pavia, amidst triumphant acclamations, and he began his sermon by an allusion to his own approaching death, saying, “ Physician cure thyself ; apply thy doctrine to thine own heart.” But this digression the hearers did not understand till afterwards. Bernardine of Monte Feltro and John de Capistrano were not, however, the only eminent preachers who succeeded the holy advocate of Sienna. The friars, Matthew of Sicily, Antonio of Bitonto, John of Prato, James Donzelli, of Bologna, Sylvester of Sienna, Antonio of Rimini, Michael of Milan, Antonio of Vercillis, Cherubino of Spoleto, Dominicus of Padua, and Theodoric of Osnaburg, a minor of Cologne, and celebrated throughout Germany, were all conspicuous on the holy mountain, as preaching the precepts of the Lord. Thomas Illyricus, surnamed in France, le saint homme, was a preacher whose holy doctrine watered all Europe. This was the friar so dear to pope Clement VII. and who preached with such boldness against the vices of ecclesiastics, and of men in all orders of the state, openly predicting the heresy of Luther fifty years before it broke out, so that he is styled the Cassandra of our evils by Floremund Remund, counsellor of the parliament of Bordeaux, in his learned work, *De ortu hæreseon* *. These lights have led us to the close of the fifteenth century. Let us go back then to more ancient days.

What would it have been, think you, reader, to have heard St. Bonaventura preach, or to have sat at the feet

* Lib. I. c. 3, and 4.

of the profound and fervent Francis, listening to those simple, moving exhortations which converted whole generations to the love of poverty, and the obedience of Christ ! It often happened that more than thirty persons would be converted to penitence, after hearing one of his sermons *. A contemporary monk of St. Justina, at Padua, in his chronicle of the events which passed in Lombardy, describes the effects produced by the two trumpets of heaven, Dominick and Francis, which awakeden the sleeping world with a fearful sound, and excited men to battle against the triple enemy. Hell to its centre felt the power of their preaching, which cut off its wonted supplies at the source. All Asti, we read, was moved at the voice of Francis. All began to fear and obey God, to forgive one another, to forget injuries, to bury hatreds, to renounce usury, to make restitution, to avoid pomps and plays, and every kind of luxury. Turin could only be consoled at his departure when he pronounced his solemn blessing over the city, in the words of St Paul to the Thessalonians. At Cortemilla the country people left their ploughs and implements in the fields, and flocked in to hear his discourses on the vanity of the world which passes away, the penalty that awaits sinners, and the everlasting beatitude of the just. The hardest hearts were split like rocks of the desert, and the waters of contrition flowed from them. Whenever he entered towns or castles, the clergy used to go forth to meet him, the bells were rung, men exulted, women rejoiced, and the boys and children came out with branches in their hands, glorifying God †. The first act recorded of the blessed Silvester, the Florentine, indicated the enthusiasm which was produced by a preacher whose sermons he loved to hear ; for in the year 1312 he used to assist at the sermons of brother Jordan of Pisa, a celebrated Dominican, in the convent of S. Maria Novella at Florence, who preached with great effect not only in the churches, but in the streets of the city, and while pausing to rest between the divisions of his discourse, Sylvester used to present him with wine, by which attention he first attracted the notice of the preacher, and subsequently became his disciple ‡.

* Les Chroniques des Frères Mineurs, Lib. II. c. 35.

† Wadding, Annales Minorum, tom. I.

‡ Annal. Camal'lulens. Lib. XLVII.

Berthold of Ratisbon, a Franciscan in the time of Frederick II., commended among the illustrious writers of Germany, whose sepulchre is seen in the convent of the friars at Ratisbon, on which is inscribed nothing but “Bertholdus magnus Prædicator,” had such a grace of preaching, that often sixty, and sometimes even a hundred thousand persons would assemble to hear him, and wait during many hours for his arrival. The field near Glatz, in Bohemia, where he used to preach, is called the field of Berthold to this day. On one occasion, he spoke with such force against the sin of luxury, that a certain woman who was a public sinner, is said to have expired through contrition on the spot, though others say that she was restored to life by the intercession of the holy preacher, who rebuked the people for ascribing it to the judgment of God *. St. Anthony of Padua preaching at Limoges, such was the multitude of people that there was no church large enough to contain them, and he preached in the open air. A certain woman greatly desiring to hear him, and her husband not choosing to permit her, as it was a league distance from the town, she went up into the granary, in order at least to content her eyes, by looking towards the spot where he was at that moment preaching the word of God †. Similarly at Padua, there was no church large enough to contain the crowds that flocked to hear him, and he therefore used to preach in the open air, and sometimes in a great field without the walls. The people used to rise by night, and hasten with lanterns to keep places in the field, when it was known he was to preach. There you might have found illustrious nobles and high-born dames humbly clothed, passing through the obscure night undistinguished from the people. During his sermons, the shops used to be closed, the courts of justice suspended, as if it had been a solemn festival, and with such deep attention was he followed, that among thirty thousand persons no word of interruption could be heard, and if he had not had guards round him, the people would have torn off his clothes out of devotion, to possess themselves of its fragments. Wherever he preached, quarrels were appeased, debtors were liberated, restitution was made of

* Wadding, Annal. Minorum, tom. IV. a. 1272.

† Id. Lib. v. c. 21.

goods, and there were not priests sufficient to hear the confessions of the penitent people *. Some minor friars journeying, overtook a very old man returning from Rome, who told them, in course of conversation, that he had known their great preacher, St. Anthony of Padua, and that formerly he was one of twelve robbers who used to lie in wait in the woods, to plunder travellers. "We used to hear," said he, "of the wonderful preaching of this holy man, and how more than twenty thousand persons used to assemble when he preached, and we all felt great curiosity to see him. So we changed our dresses, and disguised our faces, and went to the place where he was preaching, and heard him. It seems like yesterday when I think of that hour in which we felt our hearts melting like wax before the fire at the sound of his voice. We became contrite for our wicked lives, we grieved, we wept, we lay upon the earth. Finally we took courage, addressed the saint, and confessed to him all our sins. Would that I could explain, but I cannot, how piously, how paternally, he received us. What celestial doctrine, what words of salvation he administered, what promises he gave us if we persevered in God's service, what threats he held out if like dogs we should 'return to our vomit.' Some few of us did return to their former wickedness, whom I myself saw perish shortly afterwards in horrible torments. All the rest continued holy, and made a blessed end. On me, besides other penance, he imposed the obligation of visiting twelve times the threshold of the apostles. I am now returning with a light heart from my twelfth visit to the sacred city, hoping that in me will be fulfilled the promise of the holy man, whose doctrine, as far as human infirmity permits, I have, from that time, endeavoured always to observe †." During a mission which St. Francis Regis made in the wild and mountainous country of the Vivares, one day as he left a church, he met a troop of people, who came up and said, "Father, do not refuse us the consolation of hearing you preach; since yesterday we have travelled twelve leagues through horrible ways, in order to have this satisfaction." The holy priest, sustained by his zeal, returned into the church, and made them a pathetic exhortation. John d'Avila, surnamed the

* Wadding, Annales Minorum, tom. I.

† Ibid. tom. V. 1292.

apostle of Andalusia, from the great effects which followed his preaching, was delivering a sermon in praise of St. Sebastian, at the hermitage dedicated to that martyr, on the heights above the city of Granada, when John of God first heard him. He spoke with such force of the happiness of those who suffer for Jesus Christ, that his words proved so many burning darts in the heart of this obscure stranger youth, who from that moment became incapable of ever afterwards loving temporal things *. St. Philip Neri once preached a sermon upon non-residence, before the pope Gregory XV., which had the effect of sending thirty bishops to their respective dioceses the following day. Thomas à Kempis was surnamed the hammer, from the force with which he was able to strike the hearts of sinners. Nor did the highest ecclesiastical dignity interfere with the exercise of these wondrous powers of persuasion, as the sermons of Gregory and Leo, and innumerable other pontiffs can bear witness. After hearing Hildebrand preach, when prior of Cluny, the emperor Henry III. exclaimed that he had never heard a man preach the word of God with such boldness †. This was the renowned light which subsequently from the seventh Gregory illuminated the whole church. It is supposed that Dante first conceived the idea of his immortal poem from hearing this holy cardinal Hildebrand preach in Arezzo, before pope Nicholas II. on the punishment which is visited upon lost sinners.

Let us now proceed to make some general observations respecting the preaching of the clergy during the middle ages, of which we have already collected sufficient examples from the pages of our ancient history. That the importance of such instruction was fully recognized, and that provision was made to supply it to the people, may be our first conclusion. As in the first ages, during the sermon the church was open to all persons, even to avowed infidels, which circumstance accounts for the silence of the fathers respecting the Christian mysteries. The great St. Francis had such a veneration for preachers who announced the Word of God, that he used to say, if he should meet a priest and an angel descended from

* Hist. de la Vie de St. Jean de Dieu.

† Paul Bernried.

heaven, he would first kiss the hand of the priest and then pay his reverence to the angel.

" If every discipline," says St. Augustin, " however mean and easy, requires a doctor or master that it may be learned, what more full of rash pride than to be unwilling to learn the books of the divine sacraments from their interpreters *." The church in the most solemn celebration of her greatest mysteries, reminds the faithful that their faith comes from hearing. Thus in the prose, she sings, " Docti sacris institutis ; dogma datur Christianis." Independent of supernatural causes, the superior efficacy of oral over written instruction, was shown by the great moralists of antiquity. Socrates remarks, that persons who apply to written sources, often esteem it of more importance to understand the words that are written than the things about which they are written †. Learning and philosophy in the middle ages gave no dispensation to neglect hearing the humble minister who announced in the church the mysteries of redemption. St. Bernard and Peter of Blois, and Alanus de Insulis, are expressly recorded to have preached in the schools of Paris before the masters and scholars. Sermons used to be preached in universities on all the great festivals, on the patron anniversaries of each particular school and nation, on the feasts of St. Nicholas and St. Catherine, and during Lent ; which discourses were to be suited to the capacities of the young as well as of those more advanced in philosophy ‡. The solicitude which the church evinced that the people should be supplied with instruction in the form that was suitable to them, has not been sufficiently pointed out by modern writers. We find that in the eighth century the council of Rheims prescribed to ecclesiastics who should preach in Latin, to repeat their homilies in the Romanfrustic or Theodesque tongue, which was then better understood. The fourth canon of the council of Tours, orders that every bishop should translate his Latin sermons into the Tudesque language ; and the same injunction is repeated by the council of Arles in 851, on the ground that the homilies of the clergy may

* De utilitate credendi. 35.

† Plato Phædrus.

‡ Bulæus, Hist. Universit. Parisiens. tom. II.

be more easily understood by all. This council prescribes that they should preach on the Catholic faith, on the eternal rewards of the just, and damnation of the wicked, on the future resurrection and last judgment.

In the eleventh century Guibert, the venerable abbot of Nogent, in his book, "Quo Ordine Sermo fieri debeat," which was recommended as a manual by Pope Alexander, to all preachers, insists principally upon observing a style that will be intelligible and edifying to the common people. "To the illiterate," saith he, "plain and simple things must be preached; but to the learned a preacher may mingle things more sublime that may please their capacity, but so that at the end he may come round again to address the simple and unlearned, that these may go away instructed and consoled. To children not only milk, which is indispensable, but sometimes a crust of bread also is given, and in like manner, while simple doctrine should be preached to the vulgar, some deeper things may be added which will please both the more intellectual auditors, and excite the attention of the others, who are often attracted by what sounds new and difficult. We should preach with great moderation on the sacraments of faith, for from too profound preaching error may arise among the less intelligent; but it is more easy and secure to treat of virtues and vices, for all our efforts should have in view the manners of the interior man, whose passions being common to all, every man will find the meaning of the preacher's words in his own heart: and no preaching seems to me more wholesome than that which shows a man to himself, and enables him to behold what passes in his own interior. To form the preacher, not alone study, but experience, and the knowledge of other men's minds, and of his own, is necessary: his style should be in conformity with that of the Holy Scriptures, and he should be familiarly acquainted with the different senses of all the phrases and expressions used in them. Above all, the auditors must be impressed with a conviction that the preacher speaks sincerely and without any intention or desire of praise, not for the sake of money or ostentation, which more than all would offend them, but having in view only the salvation of those who hear him *." To the

* Guiberti Abb. Novig. Lib. Quo Ordine Sermo fieri debeat.

same effect were the directions which St. Francis gave to his friars in the year 1223. He tells them that their sermons should be for the utility and edification of the people, on vices and virtues, pains and glory. Such also was the example which he set them, as may be witnessed in his preaching in 1219, before the immense assembly when St. Dominick and Cardinal Hugolinus were present, when his theme was thus delivered :—

“Magna promisimus ; majora promissa sunt nobis :
Servemus hæc ; adspiremus ad illa.
Voluptas brevis ; poena perpetua.
Modica passio ; gloria infinita.
Multorum vocatio ; paucorum electio.
Omnium retributio.”

“We must preach,” says St. Bernardine of Sienna, “justice to the unjust, truth to the ignorant, and salvation to the impious.” It is clear from what we have seen that the solicitude of the church was admirably served by the indefatigable zeal of her ministers. The blessed James Picinus, a minor friar, whose preaching was celebrated through Italy, discharged that office with such obedience, that during forty-seven years he preached almost every day to the people, and occasionally in three or four places on one day, and yet such was the austerity of his life, that he passed the greatest part of the night in meditation after singing the divine office with the brethren *. St. Vincent Ferrier preached to the people every day, as did also St. Bernardine of Sienna, till within a few days of his death. On the Friday before the ascension, preaching in the old ducal town of Phalacrina, Bernardine implored his auditors to pray for his happy passage, and it was immediately after this last most sweet discourse, which had dissolved the multitude in tears, that he was seized with fever. Then he told his companions that he had finished his sermons, and that he was going to leave his bones in the city of Aquilana. Thither he went in great weakness and suffering, but refreshed with celestial visions. On the Sunday he entered that city amidst the greatest devotion and congratulations of the people. The magistrates and nobles sent him the best physicians ; but nothing could arrest

* Ann. Min. tom. IX.

the disease. At Nones on the vigil of the Ascension, he expired with a smile while the brethren were singing that antiphon at vespers, "Pater, manifestavi nomen tuum hominibus *."

Bernardine, of Monte Feltro, when at Sienna, used to preach three times each day. He used to repair to cities infected with the plague, and when the magistrates desired him to desist lest such assemblies might increase the evil, he would reply, that the word of the Lord, and not herbs and medicines, would save the perishing people. It was a common remark that those who went to his sermons were never or rarely attacked †. In 1481 he preached at Venice in the square of St. Mark, there being no church large enough, every day from Palm Sunday till the octave of the Resurrection. This holy friar, in proportion as his strength failed, on the approach of death, only preached with the greater fervency. Shortly after his arrival at Pavia, the people observing his weakness, and that he could not walk without a staff, entreated that he would repose at least for three days. Even when the fever increased he was unwilling to remain in bed, but at the door of his chamber in his convent of St. James, which adjoined the church, he received the chief men and magistrates of the city, and exhorted them to live well. To the last he continued to join in the office, and to administer salutary instruction, till, amidst the psalmody of the brethren, without any sign of perturbation, with a placid and serene countenance, his spirit passed at the tenth hour of the night on the vigil of St. Michael ‡.

We have seen how the fervour and assiduity of the people corresponded with the solicitude of the church, and of her ministers. It was a common precaution of all the great preachers of the middle ages, to travel by night, lest their departure should be prevented. St. Vincent Ferrier shortly before his death, feeling a great anxiety to return to Spain in order to die there, set out from Vannes mounted on an ass at midnight, and for the same reason as obliged the Italian preachers to choose that hour for beginning their journeys §. That solicitude

* Ann. Min. tom. XI.

† Id. tom. XIV.

‡ Id. tom. XV.

§ Lobineau, Hist. de Bret. Lib. IX.

was also seconded by the zeal of persons in civil authority, who generally seemed to have no object so much at heart as the religious instruction of the people. We read of the Prefect of the citadel of Peschara, on the lake of Garda, a noble man of the Vitturina family, procuring, in 1471, Bernardine Feltrensis to preach frequently to the soldiers of the garrison *. Such solicitude would be little in harmony with the spirit of later times. *Aeneas* was a celebrated preacher in the days of Charles the Bald. “Whoever touched the threshold of the palace,” exclaims his contemporary, the Archbishop of Sens, “to whom the labour of *Aeneas* and his fervour in divine things did not appear † ?”

Notwithstanding the ardour for preaching which distinguished the religious innovators, the result even in regard to the quantity of instruction supplied, was very contrary to what the generality of modern readers suppose. In fact it was not so easy to find a substitute for the steady principle of faith, and the zeal of men of the interior life truly devoted without any personal ambition. The chiefs of the new doctrine were, indeed, indefatigable men, and possessed of an energy and an activity which seems almost incredible. There were, as Burton at length confesses, “superstition often in hearing of sermons, bitter contentions, invectives, persecutions, strange conceits, besides diversity of opinions, schisms, and factions ‡.” At Geneva ministers were sent to the villages to compel the rustics to come to the preaching. Nevertheless, upon the whole the ministers were deficient even in the very quality which they seemed to prefer to every other ; for while a few chiefs were reaping laurels by their eloquence, the inferior preachers lapsed into supine indifference, insomuch that Strype says that “a thousand pulpits in England were covered with dust. Some had not had four sermons in fifteen or sixteen years, since friars left their limitation, and few of those,” he adds, “were worthy the name of sermons §.” In comparison of Catholic ages the contrast continued to latter times almost equally striking, so that the anglican bishop of Llandaff, speaking of Wesley, confessed lately in a ser-

* Annal. Minorum, Vol. XIII.

† Bulæus, Hist. Universit. Paris, tom. I.

‡ Book III. 4.

§ Strype, II. 15.

mon at Abergavenny, that he found thousands of his countrymen, though nominally Christians, yet as ignorant as heathens, "and in too many instances, it is useless," he added, "to conceal or disguise the fact, ignorant either through the inattention of government in not providing for increased numbers, or through the carelessness and neglect of those whom the national church had appointed to be their pastors." Again, it must be observed that the clergy of the middle ages taught as men having authority, and not like those who look to the civil government, or to national institutions, or to any human source, for their advancement or direction. "*Docendus est populus, non sequendus*," is the maxim of the canons *, which admitted of no exception in favour of kings or statesmen, as may be witnessed in the epistle of St. Ambrose, in which he refuses to contend with Auxentius the Arian bishop, in the imperial consistory, where the emperor was to be the judge. He appeals to the former imperial rescript, which declared that in matters of faith no one should judge who was not of the ecclesiastical order, and competent by gift and authority, which was to say that priests alone should judge of priests. "When was it ever heard," he asks, "that laics might judge a bishop, or that a priest might concede to others what was entrusted to him by God? On the contrary it is for bishops to judge between Christian emperors, not for emperors to judge between bishops. Ambrose is not of such importance, that for his sake the priesthood should fall to the ground. The life of one man is not of such consequence as the dignity of all priests. If a matter is to be treated upon, I have learned to treat in the church. If we are to confer concerning the faith, it must be in a conference of priests. If Auxentius should appeal to the Synod, that he may dispute about the faith, it is not just that so many bishops should be fatigued for the sake of one, who, even if he were an angel from heaven, ought not to be preferred to the peace of the church; therefore, O emperor, graciously receive my answer, that to the consistory I cannot come. I have not learned to stand up in the consistory, and within the palace, I who neither inquire nor have known the secrets of the palace, cannot contend †."

* Ivonis Carnot. Decret. Pars XVI. 14.

† Epist. Lib. V. 32.

St. Francis preaching at Spoleto in the public square, began his sermon with these words, “*Angeli, homines, dæmones.*” This, you say, would be deemed extraordinary at present. True, and some learned critics at the time who stood in the crowd, thought it rash, but when has an academic oration produced the effects which followed that sermon, when a whole city, from being torn with dissensions and enmities, was re-united in love, and when a crowd of sanguinary nobles were transformed into pacific and blessed men! When Ferrara was besieged by the Venetians in 1483, the inhabitants invited Bernardine of Monte Feltro to preach to them. At the great peril of his life, he was introduced into the city, and delivered sermons every day in the cathedral against the licence of the citizens, the rapine of soldiers, and all kinds of injustice usual in war. In one sermon, deplored the vices of the people, and describing the wrath of God which was hanging over them, the whole multitude began to implore the divine mercy with tears. The friar wept also, but then changing his tone, exclaimed, “*O Ferrara, because it repenteth thee to have sinned, it pleaseth God to have mercy on thee. Thou shalt be delivered from this siege, and restored to thy former felicity, but beware of returning to sin, lest God should compensate the delay by the gravity of his doom **.” The clergy, moreover, taught as persons who had faith in their own doctrines, and not like men who seem ever ready to admit that they defend only a cause of secondary importance, and to concede to every sophist who advances a principle at variance with what they teach. Their tone in general was rather that of St. Augustin, where he argues against those who said that ecclesiastical celibacy would injure population and shorten the duration of the world, and begins by exclaiming, “*Would to God that all were so determined with a pure heart, a right conscience, and with faith, and the duration of this world would be shortened †,*” a boldness for which his opponents were but little prepared. Neither did they profess to unfold new views in theology, or to preach as from themselves. The sermon which S. Gall preached in Constance on the entrance of the bishop may be read in the Bib-

* Ann. Minorum, tom. XIV.

† De bono Conjug. cap. 10.

liotheaca Patrum. Hildefons von Arx observes, "that it is historical, and wholly in the style of the apostles, relating all the chief events of revelation from the creation of the world to that time *," which was the general manner of preaching during the middle ages, as may be proved from all ancient collections. Here, it must be confessed, the religious innovators at all times had the advantage of them, though Fuller complains that "aged pastors in consequence were justled out of respect by young preachers, not having half their age, nor a quarter of their learning and religion. "English Athenians," saith he, "are all for novelties, new sects, new schisms, new doctrines, new disciplines, new prayers, new preachers †." The Catholic clergy had no such inducements to offer, but as St. Augustin says, "What they found in the church they held; what they learned they taught; what they received from the fathers, they delivered to sons ‡." Hence the person of the preacher entered for little into the influence of the ecclesiastical instructions. The religious innovators seem to have paid but slight attention to the denouncement of woe against him who putteth his hope in man §. With them the inquiries were unremitting respecting who was the best preacher, who had the most eloquent delivery, or the soundest doctrine; but in the Catholic church the instructions of the clergy assumed a totally different character, and as they emanated from a higher source, so was the instrument of their communication generally lost sight of. Even of the sacraments a wicked priest hindered not the grace, which article of faith St. Anselm illustrates by remarking that Joseph sought and received the body of Jesus from Pilate who was an infidel ||. "Non exhorreat columba ministerium malorum," says St. Augustin; much less was simplicity an obstacle ¶. In general whoever was thought to lead the holiest life was chosen for the preacher. The blessed Gandulphus de Benasco, of Milan, in the year 1260, being grieved at hearing frequently his own praises, fled from his convent with one com-

* Geschichte des Kantons, St. Gallen. I. 18.

† Fuller's Thoughts, 208.

‡ St. August. Lib. II. cont. Julianum.

§ Jerem. xvii. 5. . || Elucidarium, Lib. I. c. 30.

¶ Supra Joan. tom. V.

panion and passed into Sicily, where he took up his abode on a wild mountain near Politium. His manner of life becoming known, the chief inhabitants of that town requested that he would preach the Lent sermons, which he did, preferring the general utility to his own quiet. On the fourth feria of holy week he predicted to the people that he spoke to them for the last time, and in fact while returning that day to the hospice his strength failed him, and on holy Saturday he slept in the Lord, when all the clergy and people carried his sacred body with great solemnity to the mother church, and then buried him in the humble spot which he had pointed out to them *. Thus a poor stranger was preferred by the people, and permitted without envy by the local clergy to discharge the most honourable function. The voice which announced the Word of God was listened to as something different from a human voice, and the authority of each preacher clad in the sacred vestments was felt to be the same. That in primitive times, when somewhat of the heathen spirit of inquiry and of curiosity must have still influenced the minds of men, there was less consistency of manners, and feeling in this respect than during the middle ages, may be inferred from the reproof of St. Ambrose. "I have found out, brethren," saith he, "that during my absence so few of you come to the church as if on my going away you had gone with me, and when I am drawn off by necessities, the same necessity compelled you also to go. So we are both alike absent from the house of God; I from necessity, and you from choice. Do you not know that though I am absent from the church, Christ who is every where, is not absent from it? Brother, you come to the church. There you do not find the bishop, but if you come faithfully you will find there the Bishop of bishops, the Saviour. For Christians who go to the church only when the bishop is present, seem to go not so much for the sake of God as of man, not to fulfil the office of a Christian who fears, but the service of an obsequious friend. But why do I reprove you when you can put me to silence with one word. For I see that clerks are more negligent than you, and how can I correct sons when I am not able to amend brethren; or with what

* Wadding, An. IV. 1260.

confidence can I be angry with laymen, when I am shamed by my fellow-labourers? I speak not of all, certainly there are some devout and others negligent. I name no one. Let each one's conscience answer *."

The generality of modern French writers—no English authors condescend as yet to investigate such questions—do not seem to suppose that there could have been any preacher of correct taste and genuine eloquence before the reign of Louis the Fourteenth. If I understand the Abbe Gouget aright, he was of opinion that until that period there was nothing evinced but bad taste and ignorance in the composition of sermons. Certainly, the preachers of the middle age, in composing or publishing sermons, had other views besides those of literary renown. If Jerome, a hermit of Camaldoli and apostle of Lithuania, who fled from Prague his native city, when his name became associated with the crimes and errors of faithless men, published sermons for Lent, and for the festivals of the saints, and for all Sundays, which he had preached in Poland before King Vladislaus and his knights, he declares that his motive was that the reader might pray for him†. These sermons, which were in the library of the desert of Camaldoli, were entitled "A Lent of Salvation," "Examples of Eternal Salvation," and "Lines of Eternal Salvation;" titles which alone are enough to prove how little he was actuated by views of literary vanity. Nevertheless we have already had sufficient evidence to show the groundlessness of such limitations, and, indeed, it may be much doubted, whether a familiar acquaintance with the ecclesiastical discourses of the middle ages, be the best preparation for enjoying the magnificent prose of Bossuet, or of Massillon, of which the artificial and perhaps sometimes ostentatious tone, would induce one to look back with anything but contempt upon the plain, majestic, unaffected style of the ancient preachers.

Pignotti, after observing the great eloquence which characterizes the sermons of the friar Savonarola, adds, "I hesitate not to affirm that some of his sermons are preferable to the false eloquence made use of by many modern sacred orators, in whom the truths of the Gospel,

* Serm. LXXXIII.

† Annal. Camaldul. Lib. LVIII.

instead of being adorned with decent attire, are on the contrary disguised in a swollen and far-fetched style, wherein we discover the badly-tempered colours of poetry, without the inspiration it ought to display*.”

“ Compare,” says a French historian, “ the sacred eloquence of the sixth century to that of the modern pulpit, even in the seventeenth century. Open the modern sermons, they have evidently more of a literary than of a practical character. The orator aspires rather to beauty of language, to the intellectual satisfaction of his hearers, than to act upon their souls, and produce real and efficacious conversion. Nothing of this kind, nothing literary appears in the sermons of those ages; no desire of speaking well, of combining images and ideas with art. The orator goes to the fact, does not fear repetitions, familiarity, nor even vulgarity; he speaks for a short time, but he recommences every morning. It is not sacred eloquence, it is religious power.”

It had been remarked in the middle ages, that Christ gives no full comments or continued discourse, but as Demetrius, the rhetorician, phrases it, speaks oft in monosyllables, like a master scattering the heavenly grain of his doctrine as pearls here and there. This character belongs to the instructions of the clergy of that epoch. There is no study of effect observable in them, although they feed on thoughts that voluntarily move harmonious numbers; and when there is occasion to awe brute violence, their words are like those of *Æschylus*, few, but having brows and crests, and clothed in terror. There are even sermons wholly in verse of the thirteenth century, which the Benedictines believe to have been delivered from the pulpit. In the great Franciscan and Dominican preachers we have no verbose declamations, or the ingenious eloquence of a speculative discourse; but we are struck with the solemn majesty of their apostolic style, so imbued with the sense of the holy Scriptures, and with the sentences of sacred tradition. They are quick, sententious, impressive, and even learned. The blessed Cherubin of Spoleto, never or rarely preached without a long previous study of what he was to say. Being asked by Cardinal Sabello, the legate of Umbria, why he spent so much time in preparation,

* Hist. of Tuscany, III. chap. 10.

after having had such long experience, the holy friar replied, “Though my life has been spent in preaching, yet I never dare to preach without spending previously at least seven hours in study of the holy Scriptures, and in meditation*.” Bernardine of Monte Feltro, used to say mass before sunrise, that he might have time to meditate on what he was to preach that day. St. Bernardine of Sienna must have had the whole Bible by heart, to judge from the style of his discourses. The great mysteries of salvation are the general theme of their instruction. Blessed Guido de Spathis, a most fervent and efficacious preacher of the fourteenth century, used always to hold a great nail in his hand when addressing the people, to keep constantly in his mind the memory of the Passion of Christ. This nail is still preserved in the convent of the Minors at Bologna, where he is represented holding it in his hand, with an inscription which attests the multitudes of sinners whom he turned to the wisdom of the just.

“ Angelicum virum recole per omnia mirum,
Publicas convertens, publicanosque et sœvientes.
Hunc Deus elegit, qui corda saxeæ fregit†.”

Bernardine of Monte Feltro, used to distribute papers on which the name of Jesus was written, which the devout multitude received with eagerness from his hand.

Manzoni remarks, that among the many inconveniences of the oratorical spirit, by which it is in opposition with the logical and moral spirit, one of the most common and most sensible is, that it exaggerates the good or evil of a thing, forgetting the connexion that it has with something else. So that it tends to weaken or even to destroy a complication of truths, from a wish to overstrain one, and consequently even destroys this one. This is the spirit of those who, wishing to magnify some one or other religious practice, ascribe undue power to it; and though it is true that in abandoning themselves to this miserable intemperance of mind, they do not fail at other times to administer correctives, the evil remains without being remedied, and all their other instruction becomes incombinable with this particular doctrine. From this defect the preachers of the middle age are wholly free.

* Ann. Minorum, tom. XIV.

† Id. tom. VII.

Their scholastic style gained in precision what it lost in rhetorical effect. Their eloquence was not, indeed, that kind for which men formerly raised to orators golden statues in the temple of the Pythian Apollo. It did not indicate that rhetorical skill which Socrates compared to cookery, or to any other art of flattery*; but it was not, therefore, found powerless and inefficient in converting men to justice.

A certain preacher at Puy complained to father John Filleau, provincial of the Jesuits, saying, that the sermons which St. Francis Regis was then delivering, were not composed with sufficient art, and that he did not keep up the dignity which should attend the word of God. The provincial took him to the church when the saint was to preach. During the sermon the provincial wept, and on going out said, "Would to God that all might preach with this divine unction. Let us leave the holy man to speak with his apostolic simplicity; the finger of God is here."

Amazed at the reformation of manners which attended the preaching of St. Francis of Assisium, learned men attempted to discover by what arts he attained such prodigious success, "but let the curious lovers of mundane eloquence know," says a contemporary, "that his school was the Gospel, and his master Christ."

Maffæus Veggius speaks of the preaching of St. Bernardine, and cries, "Who can describe the grace and dignity of his pronunciation, the sweetness and gravity of his style! Nature alone had taught him the perfection of the highest art of eloquence. On solemn days, when the multitude is composed of all sorts of people, his style was full of variety, in order that there might be somewhat to edify all, and as he was naturally cheerful, he often mixed pleasant with grave things. With all this, his learning was prodigious, and his knowledge of the evangelic doctrine profound. Moreover, he had a knowledge of many things, and experience of various manners, for, as he had visited all the cities of Italy, he knew the peculiar faults of each, and could prescribe the proper remedy; but in reprehending vices, he spared men, and always spoke with such consummate prudence, lest the light vulgar should be excited by him, so that he never

* Plat. Gorgias.

uttered a word that could give scandal; and, indeed, he used to say, that from the time when he first began to preach, he never uttered a word excepting with the intention of honouring and praising God." I can easily conceive the enthusiasm of his hearers, when I find that, even to a reader, his sermons furnish a study that is full of instruction and delight. Their short sentences, pregnant with subtle and profound truths, keep the attention constantly alive. They not only charm and edify, they surprise each moment, and yield a pleasure ever new and inexhaustible.

That eloquence should be studied expressly for the religious instruction of the people, was shown by Raban Maur in his Institutes of Clerks. "Who would dare to say," he asks, "that virtue should be powerless in its defenders? That they who endeavour to persuade false things, should know how to render their hearers benevolent, intent, and docile, but that these should not know? That the one should be able to relate false things briefly, clearly, and plausibly, and that the other should so mention true things, that it would be tedious to hear, difficult to understand, and, lastly, impossible to believe them? That the one retaining the minds of their hearers in error or impelling them to it, should be able by speaking to terrify, to sadden, to exhilarate, and ardently to exhort, while the others, on the side of truth, should be slow, frigid, and soporiferous? "Quis ita desipiat, ut hoc sapiat*?" "Three things," says Hugo of St. Victor, "are required in a preacher. Sanctity of conversation, perfection of science, and eloquence to win grace, that his discourse may be holy, prudent, and noble†."

As in early times‡, it was common during the middle ages to see short-hand writers taking down notes of the sermons of preachers§. Those of Savanorola used to be printed the day after they were pronounced, and sent in detached sheets to all parts of Italy. Certainly such passages and customs imply both a sense of the importance and great ability in the exercise of sacred eloquence. Nevertheless, its force was in simplicity and sanctity.

* Rabani Mauri De Institutione Clericorum, Lib. III. c. 19.

† Hugo Vict. Eruditionis Theolog. ex Miscel. Lib. IV. tit. 64.

‡ F. B. Ferrarius de veterum Christianorum Concionibus.

§ Journal de Henry IV. 1600. 8. Fev.

The Bernardines, the Vincent Ferriers, the Suffrens, and generally in all ages of the church, the preachers who excited the greatest movement, were humble men, who desired no other eloquence but that of sincerity, no other applause but tears, no other testimony but conversions. Jerome, a Stupha of the convent of St. Saviour at Florence, used to study his style in hermitages, in woods, and desert places, nor had he any books excepting some fragments of the Scriptures; but no one, either learned or unlearned, was ever weary of hearing him, though he sometimes preached for two or three hours, and no church was large enough to contain the multitude that flocked to hear his sermons. In the lent of 1459, he preached in the cathedral, and at the same time Antonio Aretinus, a doctor of Paris, and most illustrious, used to preach in the Sancta Croce with the friars. A friend of the latter expressed his astonishment to him, that the same effects were not produced by his sermons, as by those of friar Jerome. "Those who return from hearing Jerome," said he, "are changed into other men; they appear devout in manner, contrite in heart, with a meditative countenance, not talking to one another, but thinking how they may perform what they have heard, amend their lives, make restitution, and bid adieu to vanities. They who hear you depart joyous and talkative, not seeking how they may correct their ways, but what they may note in you; and like morose censors, they either commend your skill in speaking, or blame what you may have uttered indiscreetly." Aretinus replied as follows: "I will tell you sincerely, nor will I deny my own poverty nor his virtues. What I find in books, I bring forth without fervour, nor do I kindle those flames in myself which I ought to excite in others. I am a coal, but almost extinct. How should I kindle dry wood? but that poor and simple man is all burning, and the sparks of his ardent charity easily kindle to a flame the cold fuel." Shortly after, this learned man, imitating the virtues of Jerome, passed to the Minors, and then, having laid aside the vain flowers of rhetoric, preached not in the words of human wisdom, but in the manifestation of virtue.

When Jerome preached at Milan and at Padua, the doctors and masters ceased their lectures, that the scholars might hear him. "Go," they used to say, "hear the

preacher of the best sentences but of the worst rhetoric. Gather the fruit and neglect the leaves." When he first preached at Padua, two of the most celebrated preachers of Italy were then delivering sermons, Alexander a Saxon-ferrata, an Augustian hermit, and Nicolas Spinelli, a Florentine, but the greatest crowds followed the humble Jerome. The next year, he was chosen in preference to many learned men, to preach on Good Friday, in the church of St. Paul, in presence of the duke and senate, who, after the sermon, followed him with the utmost reverence to his convent*.

Frequently these preachers availed themselves of accidental interruptions, to throw in impressive words. Thus Herculanus de Piagale, a Minor friar, preaching on the Passion, was interrupted by the lamentations of the weeping multitude. During that solemn pause, a female voice was heard exclaiming from the crowd, "Enough, enough, Herculane, no more weeping." "Yea, but more," he replied, "Christ shed more blood for us than we have tears†."

The academic style was, indeed, excluded by the very circumstances of locality, for it must be remembered that vast as were the churches of the middle ages, it was nevertheless often necessary to preach in the open air to satisfy the multitude of auditors. There was no association of ideas formerly between sermons and velvet cushions. Pope Urban the Second being at Tours, residing at Marmonier, preached on the banks of the Loire. We find St. Francis, on one occasion, preaching on the sea-shore near Cajeta. Again, at the great tournament and games of St. Leo, given by the count of Monte Feltro, it was from a wall that he preached the memorable sermon which moved Count Orlandus Cata-nius to give him the mountain of Alvernia. Bernardine of Monte Feltro, preaching near Pantanelli, on the nativity of the Blessed Virgin, three thousand persons assembling to hear him from the neighbouring towns, in a wood adjoining the Franciscan convent, delivered his sermon from a pulpit formed with the boughs of trees. We find stone pulpits in public squares, and even amidst groves and gardens, from which holy men discoursed to the people. Many of these, like that in the gardens of

* Ann. Minorum, tom. XIII.

† Id. tom. XII.

the abbey of Shrewsbury, are of exquisite beauty. Adam Rufus, a Franciscan in Italy, in 1234, preached in a vast deserted and roofless church; and holy confessors in Ireland, preached during the later times of persecution, amidst the ruined walls of monasteries, on islands in the lakes, and on sea-beaten rocks along the stormy shore. That style was also often excluded by the very character of the men. Ruffinus, the humble and timid disciple of St. Francis, excused himself from preaching, by alleging his simplicity, till he was moved by holy obedience to consent. “Alas!” said he, to himself, “how can I preach, I am deficient in utterance? what can I say? Well, I will repeat a few plain useful words, above all, these, ‘put away the evil and do good.’” So, repeating these to himself, he hastened to the spot, and addressed the multitude. “Dearest brethren, fly the world. Sin not, if you would escape the pains of hell: love God above all things, and your neighbour as yourselves. In a word, put away the good and do evil, for the kingdom of God is near.” At these transposed words the people began to laugh, but Francis, stepping forth, supplied an admirable correction, which made error become a subtle and profound truth. “Men and brethren,” said he, “do you laugh at the words of your Ruffinus, a good and candid man, and do you ridicule his simplicity? Rightly he advised you to put away the good and to do evil. The good which you think of all things best, are human consolations and bodily delights, and these are to be laid aside; but the evil, which is the greatest among worldly men, is to do penance for sins, and to take up the cross daily, and this is the evil which your fellow-citizen desires you to do; he adviseth you to put away carnal delights, to chastise your bodies, and to cease from sin, because the kingdom of God is nigh.” At these words the laughter was changed into tears, and in that multitude there was not one whom the words of the man of God did not fill with amaze, and cause to weep abundantly*.

St. Bernardine of Sienna, in the height of his celebrity, used to think that he was only fit to preach in small rustic towns; and, at the end of his sermons in great cities, when the people used to follow him with every expression

* Wadding, IV.

of honour, he would appear so sad and dejected that one might suppose it was some prisoner that men were leading to execution*. Bernardine of Monte Feltro, who traversed Italy so often in all directions, would always travel on foot, through snow or rain, over rock or marsh. At the town of Trajadi, a sumptuous repast was provided for him after his sermon. He ordered it to be distributed to the poor, and then going without the town, sat down under a tree and made his repast of fruits and bread.

Let it be observed, at the same time, that the negligence and simplicity of the ancient style was such as would have been suggested by art, rather than the result of inability. Raban Maur left admirable rules for the composition of sermons, and showed the necessity of avoiding a foolish and inflated rhetoric. He remarks that those who have most poverty in themselves, are the slowest to take advantage of the rich eloquence of the holy Scriptures; that many things should be delivered in a humble, gentle, and temperate strain, that, above all things, the preacher should use words that are easily understood by the people, and he asks, "Of what use is it to have a golden key, if it cannot open what we want? Or what objection can one have to a wooden key, if it can do this, since we only desire to open what is shut? To the grandest points there should," he observes, "be always a temperate beginning; and it is even in the power of a preacher really eloquent, to treat in a humble and moderate style, the very subjects which may be delivered in a grand and magnificent manner, that by means of this dark veil they may be made to appear still more luminous†." "In preaching use a simple style," says St. Vincentius, "and a domestic language, to declare particular acts. Use familiar examples, and let all your words seem to come from your mind, not from pride, but rather from the bowels of charity and paternal piety. A general discourse upon virtues and vices moves the hearers but little ‡."

"As we pity," says Raban Maur, "one that hath a beautiful body with a deformed soul, more than if he had

* Wadding, tom. X.

† Rabani Mauri De Institutione Clericorum, Lib. III. cap. 35.

‡ Tract. S. Vincentii de vita Spirituali cap. de modo prædicandi.

also a deformed body, so when trivial or deformed things are delivered with eloquence, they are more calculated to excite disgust than if they had been spoken in common language *." In conformity with this principle the preachers of the middle ages were often Socratic in their style, or even as Alcibiades would say, Silenic. One might sometimes say of them what the disciple remarks of Socrates, that when one hears their discourses, at first they would seem ridiculous, being enveloped in a tissue of such names and words as might be compared to the skin of some insolent satyr ; for they speak of asses carrying pack-saddles, and kettle-menders, and cobblers, and tanners, and always with the aid of such words they seem to say the same things, so that every inexperienced and foolish man would laugh at their discourses ; but when any one shall see them as it were opened, and view their interior, he will be convinced in the first place that their words are full of sense, and afterwards that they are most divine, having many images of virtue within them, and tending to the greatest part, or rather to the whole of what should be the object of contemplation to whoever would be a noble and just man †. Nevertheless, there is no affectation of negligence discernible in the ancient preachers. St. Chrysostom for the sake of the language is related to have studied Aristophanes. St. Avitus, archbishop of Vienne, writes to Viventiulus the rhetorician, and says, "I have heard that in the homily which I lately delivered to the people of Lyons, on the dedication of the Basilica, you say that I committed a barbarism, and thus was guilty of a fault in a public discourse. I confess that may have happened, especially to me, for if in greener years I had made any proficiency in the study of letters, 'Omnia fert ætas.' They say that you blame me because I made the middle syllable of potitur long, not following Virgil, who made it short, saying vi potitur ‡; but that is pardonable in a poem, and we find that Virgil has often so presumed in his works, content to commit a barbarism and to invert the nature of syllables contrary to the laws of art, when necessity requires it. As where he says, 'Non erimus regno indecores‡,' or 'fervere Leucatem §,' or that

* Tract. S. Vincentii de vita Spirituali, cap. de modo prædicandi. III. 35.

† Plato Conviv.

‡ AEn. III.

‡ VII.

§ VIII.

** Namque ut supremam falsa inter gaudia noctem
Egerimus *.*

Virgil used a poetic licence in shortening the middle syllable of *potitur*, which is necessarily long.” After some grammatical discussion, he concludes by admonishing this orator to beware in future how he passed such judgments. “ *Quod amicum attrahere magis studiis quam detrahere, et oratorem eloqui potius quam obloqui decet †.*” St. Jerome had remarked that the Arians in ordaining men did not so much require them to be imbued with the sense of the Holy Scriptures, as that they might be able to please the ears of the people with the flowers of declamation. “ Hence it was,” he said, “ that the Arian heresy employed more the wisdom of the world ‡.”

St. Gregory Nazianzen severely condemned those preachers who transferred the eloquence and pronunciation of the theatre to the chair of evangelic truth §. If, on the one hand, laymen during the middle ages knew that it was a grievous fault to criticise a preacher, on the other the clergy when discourse was held, did not stand forth before them as players, delivering artful declamation with the tone and action of tragedians : they were impassioned, earnest and eloquent, but it was a passion totally removed from all effeminate desire to draw tears, an earnestness which was not noisy and affected ; an eloquence which had nothing in common with the tricks of a scenic representation. The awful severity of truth little accorded with the unmanly fondness for dwelling on the detail of human sufferings, and what was bad taste in a poet like Euripides, would have sounded like profanation from the lips of one who was to announce the doctrines of the cross and the fact of the eternal existence. It is clear, too, that the preachers of these times addressed themselves to the understanding and passions, but not merely to the ears of men : for their sermons lose nothing by being read, and that also after a lapse of eight hundred years. The effect was produced by words full of sense, not by a prolongation of sounds which so far from moving the passions religiously of an intellectual audience, would wound and exasperate them. Dante, indeed, blames the unwarranted conceits of some

• *Æn. VI.*

† *Epist. 41.*

‡ *Adv. Lucifer.*

§ *Orat. XXVII.*

preachers of his time in Florence, who were addicted to vulgar familiarity, and the desire of jests and gibes ; but even when accusing these of neglecting the book of God, he speaks of the favour which he wins for himself who meekly clings to it. The holy fathers sometimes, though indeed most rarely, adopted a light and facetious style in exposing the errors of the heathen superstition ; as when St. Augustin says, “ In the plague they must bring Æsculapius from Epidaurus to help Rome, since Jove, the king of all, who had been seated for a long time in the capitol, having spent his youth in licentious pleasures, had, perhaps, never leisure to study medicine *.” The pleasantry or familiarity of the preachers of the middle age was at all events better than empty declamation and the affected intonation of words signifying nothing. It had even an odour of philosophy about it, as may be witnessed in the sermons of brother John of Rochetaillée, a learned and holy friar of the fourteenth century, whose pleasant apologetics reminded proud and worldly ecclesiastics that God was the best possession †.

Bernardine of Monte Feltro, who used to say pleasantly that he was of the illustrious house of Piccoluomini, alluding to his stature, which obtained for him the surname of Parvulus, introduced the same idea into the affecting sermon which he preached on entering Pavia, where foretelling his own death, and apostrophising himself, he said, “ A great sea is shortly to be passed, deeper for those to whom the care of others has been committed, and how much more then for me who am so little ? but I will keep near the shore.” But what is most of all striking in the sermons of the middle age is their mild and persuasive tone, that artless sweetness which no affectation could attain to, and which can hardly fail even at this distance and under circumstances of society so changed from the time when they were first delivered, to act with religious power on the hearts of all who hear them. In them breathes the gentle spirit of moving words. “ Testor Jesum,” cries the monk John, speaking of his master St. Odo II., abbot of Cluni, and of his instructions. “ Testor Jesum, quia ex ore hominis numquam audivi tantam dulcedinem sermonis ‡.” Seldom do

* De Civ. Dei, III. 17.

† Paradin. Hist. de Lyon, Lib. II. 86.

‡ Bibliothec. Cluniacens. 21.

these orators aspire to cast forth lightning and thunder like Pericles, but they generally announce their majestic lessons and develope their innocent thoughts in that meek and soothing style which reminds one of Cicero's expression, when he said that his eloquence began canescere. It was not what Quintilian calls "circulatoriam volubilitatem;" it was a style sober but splendid, and full of majesty; condensed and abounding in sense as in the opening lines of Lewis of Grenada's sinner's guide, which never grovels, but pursues its even way, never beats the air, but like an oracular voice impresses the ear with reverence: nothing graver, more prudent, more simple, more studious of truth and virtue: soft and full of refreshing lustre, like the dew of heaven, these chaste and holy thoughts descended into the very deepest recesses of the human heart. True, they were humble, and often unlearned men, but they were imbued with the science of the sacred Scriptures; they knew the psalms, they knew sentences of the fathers, they knew decrees of the church, they knew traditions of wisdom, they knew secrets of grace, they knew the lives, they knew the death of the just. If they were not orators after the manner of Greece and Rome, their high conception soared beyond the mark of mortals; if at times they added things so profound that we cannot follow them, when the flight of holy transport had so spent its rage that nearer to the level of our thought the speech descended, the sounds that issued were of justice and mercy, words like those of angels worthy of sacred silence to be heard. Their discourse, as Bernardine of Sienna requires, was vivifying to the dead, illuminative to the blind, inflammatory to the frigid, nutritive to the hungry, defensive to the tempted; it softened the obdurate, it consoled the despairing heart. There arose from it purity to the defiled, health to the diseased, strength to the weak, and glory to those who sought salvation. It is not derogatory to almighty grace nor injurious to the divine word to acknowledge that when excited even by the natural love of truth and justice, the tongue of man can play upon the heart with wondrous skill, and draw from it tones of ineffable sweetness. Might not one suppose that the young Athenian in Plato was describing a saint Eligius or Edmund, or holy preacher of living justice, when speaking of his master, he says, "Truly, when we

hear any other orator, however admirable, delivering other discourses, it may be said in a word that we take no interest in him; but when any one hears you, or hears some other person repeating your words, however mean that person may be, whether it be a woman or a man, or a youth who hears them, we are struck, and as it were led captive. Sooth, as for myself, whenever I hear him my heart leaps more than that of the Corybantes, and my tears burst forth by the force of his words; and I see many others who are affected in the same way; but after hearing Pericles and other great orators, I am indeed of opinion that they speak well; but I am never moved in this way, neither is my soul troubled nor affected with pain as if enslaved; but by this man I am thus affected, and that to such a degree that I am forced to believe that to be as I am is not to be: I know also perfectly, that if ever I lend my ears to him I shall be unable to resist, but must suffer these things; for he compels me to confess that wanting much I still neglect myself while I attend to the affairs of the Athenians. Therefore do I fly from him, stopping my ears, as if from the syrens, that I may not grow old in attending to him. And, moreover, it is only in his presence that I am susceptible of shame; for I know well that I shall not be able to persuade myself but that I ought to do what he desires me; but yet when I go away I am subdued through respect to the multitude. Therefore I run away from him and I avoid him, and whenever I see him I feel ashamed, and oftentimes I would that he were no longer living among men; though if this were to happen I know well that I should grieve still more, so that I do not know how to act with regard to this man *." From many passages in the writings of Plato, it is easy to gain some insight into mysteries concerning the instructions and influence of the Christian teachers. If the voice of natural justice could work so upon the feelings of a generous youth, what must be the impressions produced by the announcement of the everlasting Gospel? "I myself," says an ancient author, "was a witness of a preacher whose writings sufficiently evince the fervour of his zeal, who for the purpose of preaching during the five or six years that he preached in Italy, never studied

* Plato Conviv.

in any other book but that of the passion of Jesus Christ. Seven years past, when I was in a convent of our order named Fonte-Palombe, forty miles from Rome, this venerable and devout man, on the night of the stigmata of St. Francis, was sought for in a grotto which was within the enclosures of the convent, that he might come and preach before the brethren, who were waiting in the church after matins. Freely the sage, though wrapped in musings high, assumed the teacher's part, and mild began. Then without having made any preparation, excepting what he had in his solitary communion with God, he spake such high things with such an extraordinary fervour, that I felt quite out of myself. In truth, being in the number of thirty monks, there was not one who did not shed hot tears. And now whence had he this which he delivered, performing as he did this divine action without any premeditation? He gained it all at the foot of the cross of our adorable Jesus, whose sacred name he pronounced every moment with a sweetness that passed all human utterance *." Certainly, a preacher of this description is a right wondrous thing. In all other arts, as Novalis observes of the poet, one can perceive how the effect is produced; we can trace the operations of the painter and the musician, but this is something hidden and unsearchable. It is an art wholly immaterial and internal, while inspiring the mind with new, admirable, and transporting thoughts. We hear strange words and yet know what they signify. A magic power is on the tongue of him who addresses us, and even the commonest and most familiar words come forth from his lips with a fascinating and impressive sound, which retains as with a spell the fast-bound hearer. A Christian who had come from the school of Plato, would observe that it is not by any art such men are able to illustrate their subject, but that it is by a divine power which moves them as in the magnet, for that stone not only draws iron rings, but also imparts a power to those rings by which they can produce the same effect as the stone itself to draw other rings, so that sometimes there is a long concatenation of iron and rings all depending upon each other, while the power which connects them all together is derived from that stone; in like manner religion or the muse infuses into

* Le Sacré Mont d'Olivet, 682.

them a divine power, by means of which they can impart their enthusiasm to others. St. Gregory even says that there are many things in the sacred page which when alone he cannot understand, but which when placed before his brethren, he has understood * ; for it is with these teachers and the souls of men, as with the rings depending upon the loadstone. It is God who draws human souls through all these, whithersoever he wishes, while they hang depending upon each other, and hence men who in every thing else may remain rude and unskilful can perform this ; for they excel not by art, but by a divine power, which accounts for their remaining so deficient in other things ; for to this end are such men used by God as his ministers, that we hearing them may know that it is not they who utter these things, to whom there is no great power of intelligence, but that it is God who speaks and announces his will through them to the human race. All this is implied in the conclusion of the memorable sermon of St. Ambrose, in which he expresses his joy on the baptism of St. Augustin, whose conversion promised such utility to the church. After describing his great talents and acquirements, and how he had clothed him in a black cowl, and with his own hands tied round him a leathern girdle, he is so far from imagining that this conversion reflects glory on himself, that he declares publicly that in previous conversations with this great philosopher he used to be pressed by him with such vehemence of dispute that he was obliged in his prayers to God to beg that he might be preserved from his seductions. “Quis expugnavit enim ?” he exclaims in conclusion, “ quis superavit ? Non argumenta, non vis aliqua verborum, sed Dei duntaxat virtus et clementia † .”

The instructions of the clergy of the middle ages are extremely interesting in an historical point of view, as reflecting light upon the manners and general spirit of society during that interval ; for from the kind of imagery used in illustration, and from the particular motives employed to inculcate justice, we may learn many remarkable features which distinguished the generations to which they were addressed. The sacred Scriptures and traditions show that the Creator is pleased to accommodate his voice to the pursuits and circumstances of men, as when

* Hom. in Ezek. ii. 7.

† Serm. XCII.

to the Chaldæans, who learned wisdom not in books but in observing the sky, he sent a star. Magdalen is drawn by her tenderness and love, David by his just and generous heart, Xavier by his vast and noble sentiments and desires, Ignatius by his passion for chivalrous loyalty to an earthly king. To Hubert, the lover of hunting, who follows the chace through the immensity of the Ardennes, is given the apparition of a miraculous stag, and others are similarly excited by movements congenial to their habits and dispositions. In accordance with this divine economy, which is termed by the school congruity of grace, we find that the commissioned teachers who in different ages announced the will of Almighty God, have always availed themselves of the predominant affections and disposition of the men whom they instructed, in order more effectually to obtain their assent. Moreover, their descriptions of sacred events are often, for the same reason, mere stamps or reflections of contemporary society. For this power of anachronism is of great importance in conducting minds which are submerged in the manners of their time, which are ready to receive with simplicity any great historic traditions, provided they are clothed in the mantle which they wear themselves. It would be a curious exercise to pursue this inquiry in reference to the modern compositions. Even the spiritual writers of the present day are obliged to borrow comparisons from ignoble pursuits, and to employ motives sometimes which require not a little ingenuity in the orator to be rendered reconcileable with the grandeur and sanctity of the Christian law. Many words of daily use repeated from the pulpit, agree strangely with the evangelic context, and even from the imagery and motives employed in the exhortations which are addressed to our age, posterity will have no difficulty in determining by what name it may be distinguished. Similarly from the orations of Bossuet, and even from the pages of Malebranche, it is easy to discover that the predominant passions and tastes of the men to whom they were addressed, were not of an heroic or natural character. Now on taking up the sermons of the middle age, we feel as if in a different world, and no longer with men callous save to crime and egotism. It is the contrast between guiding a generous steed with a silken thread, and having to lash a wretched hackney, whose only spirit is in vice—a coarse, swollen

animal, without mettle and without shame. When the guides of the middle age, as in the work of Christine de Pisan, composed of extracts from the Scripture and the holy fathers, and the ancient philosophers and poets, say that human life may be strictly called chivalry, every man, as man, having to combat vices, and as a Christian to resist the assaults of the enemy from hell,—when St. Francis calls brother Gilles one of his knights of the round table, when St. Bernard, repeating the seven penitential psalms without distraction, is compared by brother Gilles to a castle vigorously attacked, and courageously defended, when St. Theresa entitles one of her sublime books “the Castle of the Soul,” we may easily infer what were in these times the circumstances of society, and the particular character of the age. From the sermon of Robert de Sorbonne, on conscience, historians can learn what were the customs and rules of the university of Paris in his time, in regard to scholastic exercises and examinations; for they are in the most minute detail employed as images to illustrate the day of God’s eternal judgment. In like manner, one can ascertain the prevailing character of men by observing the peculiar motives urged upon them by the clergy. Remark the mode of persuasion adopted by father John de Avila, “Since you are a gentleman and a valorous knight,” he says to one of his correspondents, “combat virtuously, and under no false colours, which of all things a Christian ought most to hate; and since you love simplicity, be in fact what you are in name and appearance. How will you be able to answer in the day of visitation, if you live thus now in the world? How can you suppose that your Lord will acknowledge you as his knight and champion, since you have always fought in the camp of his enemies? Do you expect a recompense from Him whom you have never served *?” Again, he says, “It is no small honour to a knight when his king places him in the post of danger. The knights and noblemen hold that for a high grace, as a mark of the king’s confidence in them; and so should the Christian regard the perils and sufferings of his course †.” The sermons of Thomas à Kempis furnish similar indications of the spirit of his age. “The world,” he says, “praises its lovers, brave

* Epist. XLIII.

† Epist. XXXIV. Pars 2.

knights and barons, because they fight for their country, and expose themselves to many dangers, and manfully to death, and prefer the common to all private and selfish good. How much more is Christ to be praised and to be loved who was crucified and slain for us all that we might live for ever and reign with him in heaven *." You perceive what were the motives that sunk the scale with men of these times, the wings by which their souls were raised aloft, and made the guests of heaven. The clergy of the middle ages have been condemned for preaching with great vehemence against customs which were in themselves trivial or indifferent. In the eleventh century, they opposed themselves to the extravagant fashion of men wearing long hair like women, floating down their shoulders. Robert, count of Flanders, who had so distinguished himself at the siege of Jerusalem, having gone to St. Omer, to celebrate the festival of Christmas, a number of prelates and lords repaired there. The holy Godefroi, bishop of Amiens, was of the number, and the count begged him to sing the mass of midnight, which he did. But when the lords came to the offering, a similar scene occurred as that which took place at Cremona, which was observed in the last book; for the bishop would not admit any one who wore this long hair. The courtiers began to murmur, and to ask who was this bishop that assumed such authority in a strange diocese? Learning that it was Godefroi, so renowned for his extraordinary piety, they resolved to sacrifice the vain ornament of their hair rather than deprive themselves of the benediction of such a holy bishop. Immediately they began to cut off their hair, some with their knives, and others even with their swords †.

Men ridicule the preachers and moralists of the middle ages, for laying such stress upon peculiar fashions of dress, and for opposing certain novelties with such vehemence; yet St. Clemens Alexandrinus, who saw the old civilization, does not think it unfitting to occupy several pages of his philosophic treatises with similar disquisitions; and against embroidered sandals, Attic and Sicyonian shoes and Persian buskins, he declaims with as much energy as any monk ever evinced in combating

* Serm. III. Pars I.

† Recherches Hist. sur le Diocèse de Séez, p. 257.

the shoes with long points *. The fact is, that even in what relates to the clothing of the body, men can be unjust, and therefore to condemn the zeal of ecclesiastics in combating particular innovations, without knowing on what grounds they opposed them, is both rash and unphilosophical †. Every kind of absurd refinement or barbarism has been from age to age combatted by the clergy, who were the guardians of good taste as well as of religion and morals. Was it ridiculous to oppose the introduction of an effeminate costume, which of itself might have softened the character of a whole people? or to abolish indecent ceremonies at weddings, or the fashion of daubing the face with red and white paint ‡? The statutes of the city of Verona record, that at the persuasion of St. Bernardine of Sienna, the games which used to be celebrated on the first Sunday of Lent, were transferred to the Thursday before Quinquagesima; and at Perugia, where many yearly lost their lives at certain tournaments, he prevailed on the magistrates to ordain that in future only blunted and inoffensive weapons should be used in the conflict. So also Bernardine Feltrensis persuaded the magistrates of Verona to put off to a less solemn day, a grand tournament which had been prepared for the festival of St. John the Baptist, and which the people were eagerly expecting. Did not such interference serve the cause of humanity and of religion, by keeping it pure from an association with passions of a doubtful character?

Upon the whole, the preaching of the clergy, during the middle ages, as well as every other mode of extending their influence, was worthy of the ages of faith, in regard to the thirst and fulfilment of justice. Even considered merely as philosophic discussions, their sermons are entitled to all possible attention. They furnish proof that the ecclesiastical superiors of those days, with all their solicitude for the sacred deposit of faith, and all their reverence for antiquity, were not afraid of genius in the pulpit. No doubt to persons who only read them, there appears to be much repetition and unnecessary development; but it should be remembered, that they were addressed to different persons in

* Stromat. Lib. II. c. 11.

† Drexelius de Cultu Corporis.

‡ Maillard Sermones in die Sancti Joannis Baptiste.

succession, and that it entered not into the imagination of those who heard them to desire novelty. “ Let us not be weary of repeating the same things, since we speak to new hearers,” says St. Augustin. Does it not often happen that when we show to persons who have never before seen them, certain spacious and beautiful places, either in cities, or in the country, which from long habit of seeing we ourselves pass by without any pleasure, we find our delight revived in the pleasure which novelty inspires in them? and in proportion as they are more bound to us by the chains of love, these things that had been old and familiar become new to us. How much more then ought we to be delighted when we approach to learn respecting God, on account of whom all things whatever that are to be said, are said; so that our preaching, which had become frigid from being often heard, should be renovated by the impression of novelty upon them, and should grow fervent in consequence of their not being accustomed to hear it *?”

In regard not only to the traditions of the early church, but also to all the old and precious virtues of humanity, the desire of the clergy was that of the great Mantuan—

“ Ferre per antiquos patrum vestigia gressus,
Et veteres servare vias, revocare vagantes
Per valles et saxa greges, per lustra ferarum
Figere in antiquis iterum magalia campis.”

That the people were to be fed with the plain and vivifying food of apostolic doctrine, and not with the empty and unintelligible sounds of a vain philosophy, was proclaimed even by the material monuments of the middle age; for on the pulpit supported by eight columns, which bishop Tustin in the year 1180 placed in the cathedral of Mazara, in Sicily, might be read this inscription, “ Prædica evangelium meum universæ creaturæ. Ad cœlum via non fuerat Babylonica turris †.” But what matter could be found more abundant for a grave and copious discourse than high themes of eternal providence, and the stupendous mysteries of human redemption? The great rhetorical masters of antiquity esteemed that they had chosen the grandest subjects, when they treated on

* S. August. de catechizandis rudibus.

† Sicilia Sacra, tom. II. 845.

virtue, on providence, on the origin of souls, on friendship. "These are the things" adds Quintilian, "by means of which both the mind and the language are elevated, when we show what things are truly good, what mitigates fear, restrains cupidity. When we learn to despise the opinions of the vulgar, and to believe that the mind is celestial," all which certainly acquire an infinite exaltation, and wholly a divine character, as we find them in the Catholic doctors, whose discourses might dispense men from ever consulting the worthies whom he opposes to the world, the Fabricii, Curii, Reguli, Decii, and Mutii. What other men will be able to speak like the Gregories, the Bernards, the Anselms, the Bedes, the Fenelons, the Challoners, on fortitude, on justice, faith, continence, frugality, contempt of pain and death? And to what class of mankind, or to what regions did not their divine instructions extend? Through their lips did the Creator send his word to the earth, and it ran swiftly; he sent forth his voice and he melted the congealed hearts; at the breathing of his Spirit the waters flowed. No longer exclusively were Jacob and Israel to be satiated, but to every nation did he send the living streams of the true life, and manifest his justice and his judgments.

CHAPTER VI.

To the morality of the ages of faith, and to that of the middle ages in particular, there belonged many remarkable characteristics which cannot be mistaken or overlooked by any one who studies history with attention and fidelity. In the first place, according to the distinction of Nicholas de Lyra, it was heroic, which was to say much in brief. Principles, thoughts and deeds bore that stamp. Proof of this may be found in every work which transmits to us

a knowledge of those times, not excluding even the testimonies of poets and painters, for they did but copy what they beheld around them when they imparted to those whom they represented that external dignity and grandeur which was only produced by the greatness of the heart within. What senatorial majesty in Titian's countenances! What a divine serenity in Godfrey of Bouillon, as described by Tasso—

“ His face and forehead full of noblesse were
And on his cheek smiled youth's purple beams ;
And in his gait, his grace, his acts, his eyes,
Somewhat far more than mortal lives and lies *.”

As Spenser says,

“ All good and honour might therein be read,
For there their dwelling was.”

This proclaimed the presence of that heroic and divine virtue which Homer, in whose mind its ideal passed, makes Priam ascribe to Hector, saying that he was greatly good—

————— οὐδὲ ἐψκει
Ἄνδρος γε θυητοῦ πάϊς ἔμμεναι, ἀλλὰ θεοῖ.

In fact, the beatitudes to which the Catholic manners were wholly directed, involve of necessity actions eminently heroic, as St. Bernardine of Sienna remarks, accepting even the exact Homeric distinction of excellently good †. “The virtue of justice in man” saith he, “is twofold, common or political, by which he renders to others what is reasonably due; and excellent, attended with hunger and thirst, when he pays the debt of justice with a fervent desire, and speculates to work it with subtilty ‡.” Instances of this subtle speculation to act justly, producing no doubt extraordinary effects—for spirits are not finely touched but to fine issues—are the occasion of many sublime and wondrous episodes in the history of the middle ages, but such as are completely unintelligible to the moderns, to whom they appear precisely the most striking

* XX. 7.

† Tom. III. s. IV.

‡ Tom. III. de Beatit.

evidence that the annals of mankind furnish of barbarism and ignorance. Not penetrating to the tender, profound and subtle motive of those they read about, they deride the vest of Dominicus Loricatus, and express pity for Jacoponus, whom they think really and for the first time mad, when he showed himself like the savage from the woods. The pages of Christian history are to them like those fragments of maps and pictures which seem so many separate monsters to children, till one gives them a clue by which they can put them together and form from them an harmonious whole.

Now, reader, mark my words, and judge whether it were not the prevalence of this spirit which rendered history so favourite a pursuit in the Catholic society of the middle ages. We are told that even down to the present day every city of Spain has its particular chronicle; and Muratori says, that "there is scarcely any city of name in Italy, which cannot show at least one or more ancient writers of its history, while at the same time it remembers and deplores having lost others *". It was the same in other countries previous to the dissolution of the ancient social state, by the influence of the new philosophy, which struck at the roots of history, by taking away from the manners of men heroism and admiration, and by reducing every thing to calculation and selfishness. When John of Bruges heard George Cœlius mention his having found in the library of the monastery of Alcoba a manuscript in which were writings of St. Isidore and St. Alfonso, *de viris illustribus*, he could not rest until he had it in his hands. Having devoured it with eyes and soul, he says, "I found all things greater than I had even expected; so that I was impelled to the resolution of applying seriously to the writing of history †." "Heavens!" he exclaims, "how rich I found Spain in all arts! What an indefatigable fervour for vindicating the Christian religion! What proofs of all virtues! How many examples of all memorable things ‡!" In like manner of every people during the ages of faith, it was a lively joy to search into annals which recounted the former deeds. "What magnanimous spirits in the barbarism of the middle age!"

* In *Script. rer. Ital. Præfat.*

† *Joan. Vasæi Brugensis Rer. Hispanicarum Chronic. cap. I.*

‡ *Id.*

cries Silvio Pellico. “ What martyrs to truth ! what benefactors to the afflicted ! what fathers of the church, admirable by their colossal philosophy, and by their ardent charity. What valiant heroes, defenders of justice ! what communicators of light, wise poets, wise naturalists, wise artists * !”

Even at the very moment of greatest enthusiasm for classical studies in Italy, there were learned men and philosophers who were too acute to speak except ironically of the barbarism of the middle ages. Benedict Aretino says, that whoever would diligently read the books of Leonardo Aretino on the deeds of the Florentines, in which he relates the whole history of Italy during a long interval, would be convinced that they had nothing to fear from a comparison with antiquity. “ What cities of old,” he asks, “ were ever comparable in true greatness to the republics of Florence and Venice, in which the worship of Almighty God was celebrated with such care and devotion, and magnificence ? Doth it not shame you,” he adds, “ to have affirmed that there were no great citizens in these latter ages, when you are constrained to behold such immortal monuments of men endowed with the highest, prudence, charity, subtilty, religion, temperance, and magnanimity ? the enumeration of whom, even in our age, must be renounced, their number being almost infinite, yet of whose heroic virtue we can judge from witnessing only a few such as Bartholomeo Valorio, Nicholas Uzano, and Guido Thomasi, men truly wise, religious, and just; who with John of Medicis, Gino of Caponi, Miglore Gradagno, Dino Ughuccii, Petro Baroncelli, Bartholomeo Corbinelli, Francis Federigo, Uguccio Ricci, Lupus Castilione, Philip Corsini, and Charles Strozza, were illustrious citizens worthy of eternal honour, whom we see succeeded by others now living, of similar manners, none of whom I ought to name unless Cosmo of Medicis, son of John, of whom it would be affectation not to speak, who was in youth of such modesty and continence, and who in mature age shows such wisdom and justice; whom the whole population love as the mildest and most humane of the human race † .

From that series of holy and illustrious men whom

* *Dei doveri degli uomini*, c. 7.

† *De Præstantia Virorum sui ævi Dialogus*.

Padua produced, what sublime episodes might be furnished to the muse! Time would fail me, were I to speak of those great counts Manfred and Raimerio, Schinello and Albert of Baone, or the nobles of the house of Carrara. To ennable that city, would have sufficed the single family of Campisamperio, which derived its name from the first of its Tiso's, of whom it boasts four,—that illustrious general and duke of Padua, who, moved at the sermons of blessed Antony, abdicated all the honours of the world, and retired to the town of Campo San Pietro, near which, in the branches of a walnut-tree, he constructed a lodge, and thence, as from a pulpit, preached Jesus Christ to the people; and which subsequently produced that other Tiso, surnamed the Great, who delivered his country from the tyrannous yoke of Eccelino*.

How clearly might men have discerned the admirable influence of Catholic principles on the heroic character, in the conduct of the great counts of St. Boniface at Verona, of that illustrious house, one of the most ancient in Italy, which derived its splendour from the favour of many sovereign pontiffs, just and religious men, who as Guelphs defended the church, as well as the freedom and dearest interests of the people†? Above all, witness Venice, and her dukes and senators. How inspiring to see them pass before us as they are cited by Crassus, and to hear of Andrew Dandolo, who in justice, innocence, and learning, was what others wish to seem, of Andrew Contarino, unconquerable in magnanimity, who evinced through life a sincerity and moderation that were beyond all praise, of Francis Donatus, whose grave and venerable aspect is so well represented by Titian, eminent for civil prudence and justice, of Leonardo Lauretano, that true lover of his country and of virtue incorruptible, of Nicolas Marcellus, a man of innocence and spotless honour, than whom no one was ever chaster as a youth, more just as a man of mature years, or more eloquent or wise in old age, so that the whole state admired and venerated him, learned without ostentation, who knew how to possess the highest grandeur with the deepest humi-

* Bernardini Scardeonii Hist. Patavinæ. Thesaur. Antiq. Ital. tom. VI. Chronic. Rolandini, cap. 7.

† Torelli Saraynæ Hist. et Gesta Veronensium, Lib. I. The-saur. Antiq. Italiæ, IX.

lity, of Nicholas Ponte, the true philosopher, not more eminent for learning than for faith and virtue, who at the Council of Trent evinced such knowledge of the Christian mysteries, that he merited praise from the fathers of every nation, of Pascalis Ciconea, uniting the rare qualities of a great prince with innocence and sanctity, and charity, who lived holily and justly, in peace and war, of Peter and John Mocenici, brothers, liberal, just, brave, and pacific, of the invincible Sebastian Venarius, who seemed raised up for the liberty of his country, and the defence of the Christian name, frugal, holy, and just, who presided at the consecration of the votive church of Christ the Redeemer, on the liberation of Venice from the pestilence, of Antonio Quirino, the accomplished senator, of Bernardo Justiniani, so admirable for wisdom and erudition, that in his old age and blindness, the senators would adopt no measure without consulting him, of Frederick Valarezso, equally eminent in the senate and in the schools, of Francis Barotius, so profound in theology and knowledge of the Christian fathers, of John Basadonna, amongst the just and innocent for ever enrolled, glorious in letters, and renowned as a senator of the republic, of Paul Paruta, who passed with such honour through all high offices, and yet left to posterity so many monuments of his erudition, of those heroic commanders Augustus Barbadico, Benedict and Jerome Pisauri, men of almost incredible sanctity of life, of Charles Zeno, whom the Venetians compare with the noblest captains of antiquity, of Francis Barbarus, uniting the splendour of all virtues to the senatorial purple, of James Fuscareno, whose private and public life were equally admirable, of Antonio Bragadeno, whom historians know not whether to rank among heroes or among saints and martyrs, of Petro Prioli, wise, eloquent, brave, and holy, of Vincent Maurocenus, alike under the robe and under the cuirass, admirable for devotion, justice, and humanity, of Benedict Eritius, who retained such purity of manners from youth to great old age, removed from all contention and vanity, never breaking silence excepting when moved by zeal for justice, of James Aemilianus, whose innocence and probity no orator could worthily celebrate, of Petre Sanutus, who united profound skill and prudence with the simplicity of a youth, and who was never known to utter a word that might not have

been addressed to cloistered nuns, of Vincent Gradonius, who seemed so richly to merit the felicity which followed him through life, of Marinus Georgius, who at his own expence built the church of St. Dominic, and died in odour of sanctity, of John Cornelius, who through love of justice would not spare his own son when obnoxious to the laws, of Marc Antonio Trevisano, who gave all his goods to the poor, and was called to a better life while assisting at mass in the church of St. Francis ad Vineam, of Vitus Caotorta, whose breast was a sanctuary, so that his countenance alone was enough to disarm the most ferocious, and convert cruelty into reverence and peace. Magnificent procession of heroic men, who seem to have reconciled two things of most difficult combination, reaping at the same time human glory and divine beatitude*.

A modern and illustrious historian remarks, “the prodigiously audacious sentiment of the moral power and grandeur of man, which was manifested generally in the twelfth century †.” He might well be struck, for throughout that whole history he had seen multitudes in every rank and order of life, ready at all times to join their invincible might to do worthy and godlike deeds. Indeed, wherever the heroic spirit existed, it was not one but every kind of virtue which might be expected, for all wickedness is weakness, as Clemens Alexandrinus remarks: “Of the thousand sins which men commit, there are but two causes, the roots of every sin being weakness and folly, neither wishing to command passion nor to learn what is right ‡.” Now this heroism was inseparable from the piety of the middle ages, for religion is its source, as is remarked by John Picus of Mirandula, in writing to a friend whom he invites to become his companion in studies, to whom he says, “You will see that with me there is nothing of more importance than that I should join piety with wisdom. A multitudinous course of discipline, and whatever letters can promise, may colour the skin, and render the face fairer as if with paint, but we cannot hope for a sound, firm, and robust mind from

* Nic. Crassi Elogia Patriciorum Venet. Thesaur. Antiq. Italiæ, tom. V.

† Michelet, Hist. de France, II. 393.

‡ Stromat. Lib. VII. 16.

any other source besides integrity of life and divine religion*.” Accordingly, this character in the first place belonged in an eminent degree to the justice of the martyrs, whom, as St. Augustin says, “if the ecclesiastical custom of speech permitted, we should call our heroes †.”

In fact, history in the middle ages adopted as such those whom the church hath canonized, and rightly, for how can an historian omit mention of those men whom God hath given to the world, by the example of whom so many were delivered from it and saved? Lucius Marinus, the Sicilian, dedicates one part of his chronicle to speak expressly of the saints of Spain: Vincent, Laurence, Illefonso, Leocadia, Eulalia, Florentina, Turibio, Victor, Lauriano, Fulgentio, Ferdinand, Valerian, Emeritius and Cheledonius, Zoylo, John, Faustus, Januarius, Torquatus, Lambert, Æmilian, Juliano, Casilla, Isidore, Antonio, Dominic, and numerous others ‡.

The charm which such lives throw upon history in general, is remarked by Chateaubriand, who says, that it is very easy to make from them passages full of simplicity, poesy, and interest. “I am aware that the very multitude of these Christian heroes has been made a ground of objection by the moderns, who seem to think that it is sufficient cause to omit mention of any person as historic, because the church has enrolled him in the number of the saints. True the multitude of canonized saints was great, but the church had not the policy of the ancient Romans, who, as Cicero remarks, did not give out that Tullius Hostilius, struck by lightning, was received into the number of the gods like Romulus, by that kind of death, lest this honour should become vile and vulgar, by being so soon after attributed to another. What a multitude of saints! True, but judge them with the penetrating eyes of a St. Augustin, when he reviews the lives of the Gentile heroes, and then say whether history hath not a right to claim them as its brightest ornaments, proving the accuracy of St. Augustin’s remark, that true justice is only to be found in that republic of which the founder and ruler is Christ §. Considering them

* Joan. Picus Mirandula, Epist. Lib. I. 33.

† De Civit. Dei, Lib. X. 21.

‡ De rebus Hispaniæ, Lib. V.

§ De Civit. Dei, II. 21.

even without the effulgent circlet, say what act of theirs wanteth the stamp of incorruptible justice, of heroic virtue? Not confined, however, to the witnesses of truth, heroism belonged to the general morality of the middle ages.

Many characteristics of the ancient Christian society, as of that of Spain before the French philosophy had entered, according to the report of Huber, may be explained in two words, neither of them, as he says, Spanish or German, and certainly neither of them discoverable in the language of any people during times of Catholic civilization. Men were not disenchanted, as the French say, nor sophisticated, according to the expression of Shakspeare, who beheld the gathering mists of the new philosophy. There was a freshness and a vigour diffused throughout the social state, and heroism was evinced in every profession and walk of life.

In our times, we hear of youths being educated for the particular ranks to which they are destined, and carefully prevented from receiving any instruction, or acquiring any disposition or taste that might inspire them with views above the condition in which it is thought most probable that they will amass the greatest wealth. Of this kind of prudence no trace whatever is found in the Catholic society of the middle ages. “Though this book,” says Giles of Colonna, “is entitled ‘De regimine Principum,’ yet the whole people can be instructed by it; for though every one cannot be a king or prince, every one ought to endeavour to become such as to be worthy of being a king or prince*.” Examine the models that used to be proposed in the different states and professions. The blessed doctor proposes the manners of youth according to Aristotle, as those which as far as respects liberality, hope, magnanimity, benevolence, mercy, and modesty become kings and all men†. Witness the treatise of Charles Paschal, on the duties of an ambassador, and mark how noble fortitude and heroic greatness of mind were then deemed essential in the diplomatic life. Witness the anatomy of a juris-consult by Marsilius Ficinus, who represents the worship of God and the love of his country as the chief organs in that composition; and observe his words to Peter Phillippe, “I need not paint

* P. I. Lib. I. c. I.

† Id. IV. I. l.

the ideal, for you have the reality in Francis Soderino your disciple, in whose manners, as in a mirror, you can behold yourself*.” The commerce, too, of those times was that great profession which Cicero declares is not to be despised†, and which Plutarch says was formerly glorious, when merchants were the friends of kings, and the founders of great states ‡. John Bonvisia, of Lucca, in the fifteenth century, when a young merchant, pursuing his affairs in Spain, though crowned with such success that the fortunes of his family became greatly augmented, yet obtained, from the generosity of his character, the friendship of princes, and became the familiar companion of courtly nobles, till the intense thirst of the heavenly life, which had actuated him from a boy, induced him to renounce the world and assume the habit of a Minor, clad in which, after three years, he returned to his country§.

Open the annals of Genoa, and mark the character of her merchants. See those brothers, Jerome and Sinibald Flisca, of immense wealth, yet than whom are no men more humble or courteous, of sweeter manners, or more remote from all ambition, studious of every beautiful art, delighting in the company of learned men, and rewarding them with liberality. Behold that Adam Centurio, in whose prudence and genius Andrew Doria so much confided, a man of the utmost gravity, abhorring all titles of honour; and that Nicholas Grimaldi, not more conspicuous for his riches, which were immense, than for his munificence and charity, assisting and supporting so many unfortunate citizens, secretly raising up so many that were fallen, and adorning the city with edifices of royal munificence||. We cannot wait to see all pass. Let us only look once more, and behold Francis Vinaldus, who surpassed all the Genoese that ever were in wealth, yet whose moderation in all things was such, that his immense riches never caused the least injury to any one, or proved offensive to any mortal eyes. His houses were neither sordid, nor such as could attract envy; his tables were always frugal, his manners abstemious, his servants few in number; and with such innocence did he

* Epist. Lib. I.

† Lib. I. de Off.

‡ In Solon.

§ Annal. Minorum, tom. XIV.

|| Jacob. Bracellius de claris Genuensibus.

persevere in this simple tenor of life, that he arrived at extreme old age without ever having had an enemy. But lest this moderation should be ascribed to avarice, let it be remembered that this was the Francis who gave that enormous sum to his country, by means of which the public debt was yearly diminished*. "The noble mercantile spirit," as Novalis observes, "the genuine merchant character never flourished excepting in the middle ages. The Medicis, the Fuggers, were merchants in the true sense of the term. Our merchants in general," he adds, "the greatest not excepted, are nothing but shopkeepers†."

In the ages of faith we can trace the same noble spirit descending into the last mechanic's veins. Witness what is related by Sophronius of the young apprentice to a silversmith, who being employed by a nobleman to make a golden cross with precious stones, which he intended to offer to the church, resolved, secretly, to add to it his wages, that it might be from him like the widow's groat. The nobleman discovered what he had done by investigating the weight, when he obliged the lad to confess the truth; and he judged it such a proof of an heroic spirit, that he made him his heir†. This is, indeed, a tale of ancient date, yet a few men of the old mark in walks of trade, have been found remaining even to our times, perpetuated not by means of hereditary profession as at Nuremburgh, but through the influence of the old Catholic morality, as in even the worst cities of France, of whom that just and benign Merlin, that father of learned booksellers on the Augustine's quay at Paris, was one, till lately, known to many scholars of different nations, and dear and venerable to all who had ever heard his sweet, wise words, issuing from a heart which seemed the very sanctuary of peace and honour. He hath lately been cut down, and sorrowful was the crowd that filled the nave and choir of St. Severin, while his body rested there, and mass of Requiem was sung. Men of various ranks stood around, but from the looks of all in common, both young and old, both of high and low degree, one might collect the general impression that the mould itself was broken, and that the loss is irreparable when such men die.

* Uberti Folietæ clarorum Ligurum elogia.

† Schriften, II. 278.

† Pratum Spirit. cap. CC.

Magnanimity was a virtue proposed to novices in religious orders, and enforced by holy masters. "It has its matter," we are told, "in the irascible quality of the soul, and its end is mighty honour and glory, not because it seeks glory as its end; for this it esteems but little, but it desires a great work, which is worthy of honour, and therefore it adds the most noble ornament to all virtue. It visits all fields and the camp of the living God, and animates heroic Christians, raising them above the level of the slothful and indifferent race. "Certe magnanimorum sunt illustria exempla Sanctorum*." Thus even the virtue of the meek inhabitants of cloisters was heroic. "I was ever so affected to maintain the point of honour," says St. Theresa, "that methinks I could never have turned back again upon any terms, when I had once said it†." Pelisson, that child of grace, was on the point of publicly embracing the Catholic faith, when De Montausier was reported to have said to a certain lady of the court, that if that happened, he would be made preceptor to the dauphin and president at Mortier, upon which he instantly resolved to defer his act of publicly embracing the Catholic faith, which he did not execute until there was no longer a pretence to any one for attributing his conversion to human motives. Every year he celebrated the festival of his reception into the church, and his deliverance from the Bastille by delivering some prisoners, which conduct evinced the same continued heroic courage.

If the virtue of political men and of merchants, whom prudence and interest must generally sway, of cloistered nuns, and convertiles, dead to all ambition of human praise, may be justly said to have been thus heroic, what may not be believed of the morality of those who followed the more eminent and exciting paths of life in those days of chivalry in which honour and religion went hand in hand? Pedantic learning hath concealed Christian titles. Heinsius talks of the ineffable and almost miraculous virtue of the Romans after the expulsion of the kings‡. Yet, compared to the justice of any humble son of the church with plain heroic magnitude of mind, and celestial vigour armed, as he is presented in history

* *Instructio Novitiorum* cap. XVIII. auct. P. Joan. à Jesu Maria. † *Life*, I. chap. 3. ‡ *Heinsii Orat.* XIV.

during the ages of faith, how easy would it be to find words to express it, how very human, not to say how ambiguous doth that pompous virtue appear? But how could one describe the just and lofty mind of Catholics true to their profession, unless by borrowing some gracious verse from poets, as that in which they speak of coming thought on thought, and not a thought but thinks on dignity. The spirit of self-sacrifice so deeply and widely diffused through society often broke forth in sublime instances to be the praise of all future generations, as in the act of Eustache de Saint Pierre and the other five citizens of Calais. Let it be remarked in this instance that it was not patriotism or fraternity, but religion which made them heroic. "It would be a great pity," said Eustache, "to suffer so many people here to die when there may be a remedy to deliver them. It would be great alms and grace towards our Lord. I have such great hope of having pardon from our Lord if I should die to save this people, that I wish to be the first."

What heroism in the morality of that ancient chivalry which was considered to be equally with the clergy the support of justice? "Often have I taken delight," says the old historian of Du Guesclin, "in hearing read the deeds of our fathers under the grace of our Lord, from whom all grace comes. Above all, there was nothing that had relation to chivalry or to clergy which are the way and protection of justice, that was not dear to me. I always haunted in my youth with clerks and knights *. Christine de Pisan after showing that the original object of chivalry was to defend the good against injustice, concludes that it was "very nobly and with just cause instituted, and that it is worthy of the highest renown."

I said, on first announcing the object of this investigation, that although we had withdrawn ourselves from scenes of human glory, we might oft again meet with knights, and how, in fact, without ingratitude, could we refuse to receive them as they pass now before us? Let us only consider the worthies of that one family who were represented on Rinaldo's shield, and not as yet from a poetic picture but from real history, and it will be seen how chivalry and clergy were allied in the cause of justice. There we shall find that as often as the emperors

* Chronique de Du Guesclin, III.

by evil counsel invaded Italy with impious arms, in order to subdue the sovereign pontiffs, the Atestine nobles, with the heroism of a pious and generous mind, undaunted by their threats, never hesitated to resist them, for the liberty of their country and of the church, and for the honour and worship of the true faith. Witness the first Azzo, in the year 949, who resisted Berenger the Third, from whose vengeance he had to fly with his wife into Germany, to Otho the Saxon, where he founded an illustrious line. Then followed his heroic son, Albert Azzo, the first Marquis of Est, by whose assistance Otho defeated the same Berenger when he again troubled Italy. Ugo no less piously contended for the true pontiff, restoring to his seat the fifth Gregory, after which renouncing war, he turned his whole mind to contemplation, and built the monastery of Vagado. Berthold, son of the second Azzo, like his ancestors, contended for the authority of the Roman pontiffs, when Paschal the Second was persecuted, whom he delivered by defeating the emperor Henry, who, though his enemy, was awed into reverence on beholding the divine virtue of a hero who had so faithfully defended against his own impiety the thrice holy priest of God. Albertacius, the fifth marquis, for his noble qualities, as Ariosto testified, deserved to be the husband of Matilda. Rhainald, in defence of the Pope, Alexander the First, pushed forth his white eagle, which thenceforth became the ensignia of his race against the black eagles of Frederick Barbarossa, and in shock of battle with his own hand hurled from his horse that despiser of religion, who could scarcely escape with the aid of his knights, and who afterwards at Venice concluded that treaty with the pontiff, which secured the liberty of the holy church. Azzo the Fourth delivered Verona from the infamous Salinguerra, and defeated Eccelino at Lubrara : his son Aldrobandino the second Prince of Ferrara, when but a youth, restored by arms to Innocent the Third, the towns which had been wrested from the church by the counts of Celani, who in revenge basely procured his death by poison. His brother, Azzo the Fifth, honoured by Pope Honorius the Third, who made him Prince of Ancona and Senegallia, had been most dear to Frederick the Second ; but no sooner did that emperor attack the church, than he forsook and resisted him, choosing rather to please God than kings ;

and when he defeated the imperial forces under the walls of Parma, and delivered that city, he chose for his share of the spoil nothing but the lions which were in the imperial camp, which he sent as trophies of his victory to Ferrara, where they were kept in that spot which has ever since retained their name. This was the hero who delivered Italy from the monster Eccelino, who had devoured thirty-three thousand men. Borsio, created Duke of Ferrara by Paul the Second, devoted all his efforts to give his people peace. The noble Gyraldus saith that we can judge of the tranquillity of his mind from merely beholding that bronze image which represents him seated in the Forum, wearing that mild and truly regal aspect, to show that all within was composed of peace and justice. He it was who constructed at great expence the illustrious Carthusian monastery, where, after twenty-two years of glorious reign, he left his bones. Hercules the second Duke, spent his whole life in labours and the exercise of justice, as if his name had been a presage of his fortune. Alfonso the First was such a lover of tranquillity, that unless it had been otherwise ordained, he would have secured to the people perpetual peace, for under that warlike front represented by the ancient painter, all composed to Catonian gravity, lay hid as under clouds, a meek, gentle, and benign spirit. Yet a brave man was he who in the battle of Aquadusa, delivered Fabricius Colonna from the jaws of death, when wounded and lying amidst hostile swords. Hercules the Second, had not like the preceding, to lament a reckless youth, for while but a stripling, his heart was given all to God, and at that age when nature is intemperate, he who was held by no law made a law unto himself, and having appeased the perturbations of his own mind, all his care was to leave an example of just life and a solid peace to his people; and knowing that no prince ever gained glory by warlike actions, without inflicting misery on men, he sought another way to glory by toiling for the public good, and for this end when he knew that there were persons who endeavoured to alienate from him the mind of Paul, the sovereign pontiff, that he might secure peace he went to Rome, and when in presence of the pope showed with eloquence that all the heroes of his family, from the first Azzo in 949, to his father Alfonso, during a space of five hundred and eighty-

seven years, had given proof of their faithful attachment to the Roman church, the safety and honour, and freedom of whose sovereign pontiffs they had always preferred before their own *. This was the true chivalrous spirit of the middle ages, so that these heroes who contended for the freedom of the church might be said, like the Herculean of old, to have laboured not only in the cause of justice, but for the salvation of the human race. The spirit of chivalry, however, then pervaded all orders in the state, and men of every degree.

Virgil's maxim, which Ives de Chartres styles the ancient praise of the powerful,

“Parcere subjectis et debellare superbos,”

is quoted by that holy bishop in his collection, with as much emphasis as if it had been a decree of the canons, teaching the duty of all men invested with power †. How noble is that detestation of baseness which was such a characteristic of Catholic manners, that as the wood of Vezelai could testify one act of treason was sufficient to impart to the scene in which it occurred, a name of infamy which, stamped by the ancient tongue, no length of years could ever obliterate ‡. The sandy plain, too, in the valley of Thurr in Alsace, still preserving in its name of the field of lies the memory of the treason there consummated against the unhappy emperor Louis-le-debonnaire by his rebellious sons, is another of those spots “where a word, ghost-like, survives to show what crimes from hate have sprung §.” That profound sense of personal dishonour on beholding injustice triumphant, is assuredly also calculated to excite the highest admiration even when presented in the page of old romance, amidst wild and extravagant incidents. When Danayn-le-Roux in the history of Gyron le Courtois, finds in a forest, a strange knight about to kill another knight and a lady who are bound to a tree, whom he accuses of treason, he throws himself between them, and exclaims, “Noble sir, do me not such an outrage and dishonour as to kill before my

* Gyraldi Ferrarriensis de Ferrar. et Atestineis Principibus Comment.

† Iponis Carnot. Epist. LXI. CCX.

‡ Duchesne, Antiquit. des Villes de France, I. 217.

§ Wordsworth.

face this knight and this lady. The shame would be mine if they should die in my presence before the reason was made perfectly clear." Upon which the other replies in a transport of rage, "God's mercy, Sir, certainly one may now say truly, that knights errant are the most foolish men in the world, for they will often interpose in matters that concern them not. But tell me, fair Sir, I pray, how doth this affair concern you, that you suppose you ought to contend with me *?" We may observe here, that the fabulist hath not roved to falsehood in his dreams, for this hearty zeal to serve justice was once diffused and eminent, where now such selfishness reigns in recreant hearts, that men are slow or neglectful to absolve their part of good and virtuous, if it be not evident that their own persons or purses are at stake. Old affection for these tales of chivalry may excuse my remarking that the maintenance of justice by individual force was not always represented in them, in exclusion of legal retribution, for even knight errants are shown respecting law. When Danayn-le-Roux hears the charge brought against Gyron and the lady by Hellyn-le-Roux, who was about to kill them in the forest, Danayn replies to him, "Sire, I am of opinion, according to the judgment of knight errants, that you cannot cause him to be put to death until you have proved your accusations against him in some court †." The abuse of the chivalrous spirit, or the extravagant language of its admirers, ought not to render us insensible to the real merit which was indicated under that title. It should be remembered that for its greatest defects there was always a remedy at hand in the religious sentiment which had overthrown the whole Gentile theory of glory, and displayed a new banner. Aristotle styles honour "the greatest of external goods." Clearly, therefore, his idea of honour was wholly different from that of the just men of Catholic times, with whom it signified an internal consciousness of fidelity, and of whom we might say, in the words of St. Jerome, "that by flying from glory they deserved it ‡." "We ought to have regard to honour," says Giles of Colonna, "not as ambitious or as placing our end in honour, but as doing works worthy of honour §."

* f. CCCXIII.

† f. CCCXIII.

‡ Epist. 27.

§ De Regim. Princip. II. l. 24.

The Pythagoreans had a saying, *Ανελεύθερος πᾶς ὅστις εἰς δόξαν βλέπει*, which might have been a motto in the middle ages, for such glory entered not into the motives of heroic men, when, as St. Jerome says, the desire of glory had been cured by the contention of humility. Catholicism, indeed, had its glory, but not such as “rears its heaven-offending trophies where praise can waste her voice on works of tears, anguish, and death *.” It was the glory of obedience, of sacrifice, of charity, humility, chastity, poverty. “The prince,” says Giles of Colonna, “must not esteem himself happy when he is in glory with men, but only when he is in glory with God †.” Literally, the mind of the middle ages might have been expressed in the words of the poet,

“ This is true glory and renown : when God
 Looking on the earth, with approbation marks
 The just man, and divulges him through heaven
 To all his angels.”

“ The desire of human glory,” says the angel of the school, takes away magnanimity : for of necessity, he who seeks human favour, must be subservient to the will of others in every thing that he says or does : and thus, while he studies to please men, he becomes the servant of each ‡.” With knightly Catholics, honour was nothing but the fulfilment of justice. The Count de Montfort had been employed by St. Louis to pay his ransom to the sultan : the king and host were already embarked, and even far from shore, when the count said, laughing, that the Sarrasins had been tricked out of more than 2000 besans, and that it was easy for any one to be more cunning than the traitors who had neither faith nor law. “ But the king,” says Joinville, “ became very angry, and sent him back, at the great risk of his life, to restore that sum to the Sarrassins.” An old French poet, after combating the chimerical ideas which some men entertained respecting honour, examines expressly in what consists true honour in every condition of life, and decides that it is in the ful-

* Wordsworth.

† Cegidius Romanus de Regimine Principum, P. I. Lib. I. cap. 8.

‡ S. Thom. de Regimine Principum, cap. 7.

filment of the particular duty attached to each, and in the exercise of all virtue *.

“ *Is est honor homini pudico, meminisse officium suum.* ”

Moreover the honour of the middle ages was generally a religious principle, as the Milanese had reason to remember, when their deputies discovered what were the designs of their own captain-general, and said in bitter self reproach, “ We ought not to have placed our hopes in a man who had outraged God and the church †.” The frank and noble confidence of the chivalrous spirit was nothing but a reliance on justice. Don Alonzo VI., after being deprived of his kingdom of Leon, lived retired at the court of the Moorish king of Toledo, whence on the death of Don Sancho, the states called him to the crown, but as secretly as possible, fearing lest the Moors, hearing of their intention, might retain him by force. Alonzo immediately disclosed it all. This confidence appeared so admirable to the Moorish king, that though he had become acquainted with it, and taken measures to prevent his escape, he not only suffered him to depart free, but even supplied him with money necessary for the journey ‡. Stephen Pasquier shows that kingdoms in the middle ages have been sometimes preserved in consequence of having their young princes confided to the guardianship of their enemies, and cites as an instance John V. duke of Brittany, who in dying left his children under the protection of Oliver de Clisson, who had been his personal foe, and a claimant of the ducal throne. As soon as Clisson received the news of his appointment, he was visited by the countess of Penthievre, his daughter, who remarked to him that the opportunity, by means of this appointment, was now come to take possession of the duchy. On hearing her speak thus, this just prince was roused to indignation ; “ Ah, wicked, miserable creature,” said he, “ you will ruin at once both the honour and wealth of our house.” He unsheathed his sword, as if the sense of injustice and dishonour had overcome every other sentiment ; but she fled precipitately, and with such haste that she fell and broke a limb, of which she remained

* Gouget, Lib. Françoise, tom. XII. 213.

† Machiavel’s Hist. of Florence, Lib. VI.

‡ Savedra, Christian Prince, II. 14.

lame ever afterwards *. Again, in what an heroic light does the justice of the middle ages, in relation to loyalty and personal gratitude, appear in the pages of history! When the prince of Wales offered to deliver Du Guesclin, on condition of his swearing that he would not bear arms against the king of England, nor assist count Henry in obedience to the will of the French king, the knight replied, “Alas, my lord, how would it be possible for me not to serve before all others, and in every place, the king of France, and his blood, who has nourished me? Truly, I would rather die in your prisons where I am than take the oath †.”

The Catholic hero of the middle ages was no time-server, no slave to human respect, when justice was at stake—

“ Nor number nor example with him wrought
To swerve from truth, or change his constant mind,
Though single.”

How noble and heroic does the justice arising from the principles of religion appear when contrasted with the civil prudence of a Cardan, where he says, writing as a philosopher ‡, “Always keep three things before your mind in every affair; quam recte? cui bono? quid dicent homines?” The just man, in Catholic ages, limited his inquiry to the first of these questions, and when once that was determined, took no thought for the consequences. That Heaven’s will must be done, as is said in the oldest tragedy of the Greeks, was his conclusion.

*πίπτει δὲ ἀσφαλὲς οὐδὲ ἐπὶ νότῳ,
κορυφῇ Διὸς εἰ κραυθῆ πρᾶγμα τέλειον §.*

Therefore the Catholic discipline was not designed for such carpet champions as old fable represents spending their luxurious days in the palace of Armida. Cur timido animo Christianus es? is the sudden and sublime interrogation of St. Jerome ||. Let us hear the voice of the middle ages in the reproof which the holy hermit addresses to Rinaldo, in the Italian poet—

* Recherches de la France, Liv. VI. 31.

† Chronique de Du Guesclin, 275.

‡ Prudens Civilis, cap. 29. 24.

§ Æschylus, Supplices, 85.

|| S. Hieronym. Epist. V.

“ ‘ Not underneath sweet shades, and fountains shrill,
 Among the nymphs, the fairies, leaves, and flowers,
 But on the steep, the rough and craggy hill
 Of virtue, stand this bliss, this good of ours ;
 By toil and travel, not by sitting still
 In pleasure’s lap, we come to honour’s bowers :
 Why will you thus in sloth’s deep valley lie ?
 The royal eagles on high mountains fly.’

Thus parleyed he—Rinaldo, hushed and still,
 Great wisdom heard in those few words compiled :
 He marked his speech—a purple blush did fill
 His guilty cheeks, down went his eye-sight mild.
 The hermit, by his bashful looks, his will
 Well understood, and said—‘ Look up, my child !
 And painted in this precious shield, behold
 The glorious deeds of thy forefathers old ;
 Thine elders’ glory herein see, and know
 In virtue’s path how they trod all their days
 Whom thou art far behind—a runner slow
 In this true course of honour, fame, and praise.
 Up ! up ! thyself incite by the fair show
 Of knightly worth which this bright shield bewrays.’ ”

The shield represented the heroes of the house of Este. There was seen Caius, chosen prince by the people, Aurielius, who, to his everlasting fame, preserved his subjects from the cruel Huns, Forrest, who fortified Aquilia’s town, and for it died, Altine, who built the great city in the vale of Po, where they of Este should by succession long command, and rule in bliss and high renown, who fought against Odoacre, and died for his sweet country’s sake, Alphorisio and Azzo, Boniface and Valerian, the last of whom dared to sustain the proud Goths, though scarce in years a man, then Henry, and Berengare the Bold, that served great Charles in his conquests high, Otho, and Almerike, the devout founder of so many churches, who seemed in contemplation wrapt, then Albert, who defeated the Danes, and Hugo, who possessed all Tuscany, Tedaldo, the puissant Boniface, the princess Maude, who conquered the fourth Henry, and from him took

“ His standard, and in church it offered ;
 Which done, the pope back to the Vatican
 She brought, and placed in Peter’s chair again.”

Azzo the fifth, and Guelpho the Bold, Bertold,

“ With the sixth Azzo, whom all virtues love.”

Such was the pedigree of worthies who seemed in that bright shield to live and move, so that Rinaldo waked up, and caught new fire on beholding these nobles of his house. With such thoughts was the heroic spirit of the Catholic morality fed and nourished. Men did not, as at present, permit their memories to dwell upon whatever subject involved any profit, any licence, any doubt, any blame, any scandal; but conformably to the apostle's precept, if any things were true, if any holy, any just, any pure, if there was any love, or anything of good report, if there were any virtue, and any praise, they thought of those things *. Hence, in ages of faith, not only, as the poet says, a proper, but also a most glorious and inspiring study was that of human nature. Shakespeare had only known in reality, and in imagination could have only contemplated a society wholly and exclusively Catholic, when he broke forth in that exclamation, "What a piece of work is man! how noble in reason! how infinite in faculties! in form and moving how express and admirable! in action how like an angel! in apprehension how like a god!"

"The Spaniards" says Don Savedra, "love religion and justice; they are constant in labours, and profound in council, neither elated by prosperity, nor depressed by misfortune †." You have in these words accurately and beautifully pourtrayed, the character of the Catholic morality in general during the middle ages. Men now are incessantly taunting generous and heroic youths, by reminding them of what they call the inexorable necessities of life, of which they are for imposing a fresh load at every stage. Aristotle says, that "all necessity is a sad thing ‡;" elsewhere he remarks, that "youth knows of no necessity." So it was with men, not in theory alone, but practically, during the middle ages. Necessity was not the word to use in attempting to persuade spirits of the old mark. Catholicism knew of no necessity but that of obeying God. Riches had not weakened in men all sentiment, by that atmosphere of little jealousies, little vanities, and fictitious wants, in which they cause so many at present to live without interruption.

* Philip. IV. 8.

† Savedra Christian Prince, 380.

‡ Metaphys. Lib I. cap. 4.

The Stagyrite had condemned the pompous trifler, who did all things not for the sake of honour and justice, but in order to show his wealth, thinking that by means of it men would gaze upon him with admiring eyes *. "Who would not desire to hold this citadel of virtue," asks St. Ambrose, "unless avarice had first weakened and bent the vigour of his mind? For while we desire to increase riches, to heap up money, to possess lands, to be the first in wealth and possessions, we lay aside the form of justice, and forfeit the common benefit †." The phrase "a good man," to signify a rich man, is put by Shakespeare in the mouth of a Jew. Had he lived in later times, he need not have sought so far for one to use it. "Avarice" says St. Bernard, "rolls on four wheels of vices, pusillanimity, inhumanity, contempt of God, and forgetfulness of death," precisely the vices most contrary to the spirit and manners of the middle ages. They were not familiar with such men as Argyrippus in the old comedy, who is represented crouching to his slave when he can gain twenty minæ from him, and addressing him with the epithets, "Salus interioris hominis, amorisque imperator ‡." "So detestable is avarice," says Giles of Colonna, "that it is better to be prodigal than avaricious, inasmuch as it is better to have a curable than an incurable disease." "Parsimony also is detestable," says that blessed doctor, "which renders men sad at parting with their money, as if it were incorporated with themselves." The proverb says, "vile men spoil a marriage and a feast for a penny-worth of pepper, rendering a whole banquet indecent from wishing to save a moderate expense §."

Persons exposed to any strong temptations, were restrained from performing the action legally denounced by pledging their word of honour, not their money. Charity and blessed mercy dictated, indeed, as we shall see hereafter, innumerable acts of heroic forgiveness; but even in the lowest ranks of the people it would have been deemed infamous to seek a pecuniary reparation from the tribunals for any injury sustained by the intimate sense of that highest injustice which was synonymous with dishonour. In

* Lib. IV. † S. Ambrosii Lib. Offic. I. c. 28.

‡ Plautus Asinaria, III. 3.

§ De Regim. Princip. II. 1. 17. 24.

short, the history of the middle ages shows that it was then universally, as at present in Catholic states, where in times of trial every event and circumstance of the world gives occasion to scenes of the noblest heroism, and the highest honour. Enter the sanctuary, visit the court, the tribunals, penetrate into private houses, from the palace to the cottage, and you find that it is so. It is a Pius VI., a good shepherd, ready to lay down his life for his flock ; it is a Don Carlos, a just and religious king, refusing all proposals of private compensation, offering himself for his people, serving them with his person, having for his cry of arms, some high sentence like that of the tragic Sophocles, " Whether successful or unfortunate, we shall be found on the side of God."

— — — *ἡ γὰρ εὐτυχεῖς
σὺν τῷ θεῷ φανούμεθ', ἡ πεπτωκότες* *.

It is a judge who waters his couch with tears before he awards just judgment ; it is a tender mother who thanks God that her son has fallen in the service of his king, and in defence of Christendom ; it is a wife solitary and helpless in a land of exile, who sends forth her royal consort to win the palm of true honour, as a Christian king, and who dies after his departure through anxiety for his safety. You perceive, reader, how the events which are passing before our eyes can throw light upon the history of past ages, how easy it would be to multiply instances, and how interminable might be the development of this truth, so rich are the varied scenes of human life where Catholicism reigns in all that can exalt the imagination, ennable the character, and strengthen the heart. The German poets of the twelfth century, in their magnificent opening of the Nibelungen lays, announcing their intention of singing the deeds of heroes, the joys and woes of just and glorious men, promise in fact nothing but what the historians of their age could furnish from living manners and the fluctuating phenomena of real life. Without doubt, the heroic character of this ancient morality involved difficulties and dangers. No one need be told that more than ordinary care was needful in the guidance of such a spirit as that ascribed to king Don Sebastian in the old

* Oedip. Tyr. 145.

chronicles, who would have condemned Hercules himself for having had recourse to the prudent policy remarked by Dionysius, in that act when he drove the herd before the cave of Cacus, in order to discover whether he really had within it the stolen oxen*. Of this young king Jerome Conestagius says, in his history of Portugal and Castile, that he used to rejoice when he fought alone with some ferocious beast. If he were about to navigate on the Tagus, or to go by sea from one place to another, he thought it disgraceful to embark on a calm sea Therefore he studiously waited for tempests : so that by a certain cruel fate he seemed to hasten to his death †. Under the influence of an heroic spirit, he that should have been, as the abbot of St. Maurice says of Manfred, “a noble creature, he that had all the energy which would have made a goodly frame of glorious elements, might, from their not being wisely mingled or properly directed, become an awful chaos—light and darkness—and mind and dust—and passions and pure thoughts mixed, and contending without end or order, all dormant or destructive.” Then might come the fluent novelist, demonstrating how much better morality was understood by those around him, though he might address himself to a generation the image of whose best-loved men would be but fit to be an ale-house sign, resembling Spenser’s portrait of loathsome gluttony :

“ Still as he rode, he somewhat still did eat ;”

men whose memories as well as hopes are in their stomach, so that they would feel no shame in strengthening their evidence, like the lying slave in Plautus, who, after pretending that he had fought from morning till night in some great engagement, adds, “ Hoc adeo hoc commemini magis quia illo die impransus fui ‡.” But the blemishes of the heroic character were so unlike the grossness of these spirits vile, that they constituted rather what St. Francis de Sales terms, “ the dear imper-

* Antiquit. Rom. Lib. I. 39.

† Hieronymi Correstaggii de Portug. et Castil. Conjunct. Lib. I.

‡ Amphit. I. 1.

fections which are means of attaining to perfection." A modern poet seems of this opinion when he says,

" The attributes of those high days
 Now only live in minstrel-lays;
 For nature, now exhausted, still
 Was then profuse of good and ill :
 Strength was gigantic, valour high,
 And wisdom soared beyond the sky,
 And beauty had such matchless beam
 As lights not now a lover's dream."

Whatever be the dangers and obstacles attached to the character of heroic virtue, it was clearly shown by the most precise and guarded moralists of the middle age, to be the highest prerogative to crown man's nature. "They who are peculiarly inclined to vice," says Louis of Blois, "and who combat against it with all their strength, arrive at a higher perfection than others who have less difficulties. The image of a prince, which is carved upon stone with infinite labour, is a far more precious work than if it had been imprinted on a soft and plastic earth. Nay more, if those who courageously combat should depart from life with some imperfections, and remain for some time in purgatory, when purified, they will enjoy in heaven greater glory than others who have not shown equal courage and devotion, though they may have attained to the enjoyment of God without passing through the purifying flames *."

The moderns, whose views of morality are said to be so superior to those of the middle ages, are impressed with a profound conviction of the truth of what Plautus says, whose words at least prove that they have made no progress in one direction :

" *Nec quisquam est tam ingenio duro
 Nec tam firmo pectore, quin ubi quicquam
 Occasionis sit, sibi faciat bene.*"

Nay, there are many of them who seem to believe with Protagoras, that the justice and virtue of other men being thought useful to ourselves, therefore the state praises and inculcates them in every man †. In general, all these writers and legislators appear profoundly impressed

* *Instit. Spirit. cap. VIII. § 3.*

† *Plato Protag.*

with the maxim of Galen, who used to say, that “ utility alone amongst mortal things is divine.” What nature herself rejects, and a certain generous sentiment of virtue proclaiming that self-interest ought not to be the ruling motive of human actions recoils from, the most popular moral writers of our age either directly teach, or clearly enough indicate : nor is it their schools alone which are infested with this persuasion, but much more the common scenes of life. “ *Sentit domus uniuscujusque, sentit forum, sentit curia, campus, socii, provinciae.*” Give them heedful note, and you will see that they are accustomed to estimate all things in part and in relation to themselves ; you will find them indeed full of noble expressions for a general woe, but evincing real sorrow only when under a private calamity. The ancient philosophers, however, on this ground at least would hardly subscribe to the opinion of the great modern author, whose affirmation that morality is at present better understood than in Catholic ages, has been allowed to pass current. The Pythagoreans certainly would have refused, who taught what would be flat treason against the modern civilization, that “ men should have regard, in the first place, to what is good and honest ; but that utility and convenience should be ranked in a secondary place *.” It must be admitted that the reverse of this maxim is nowhere found in the moral features of men during the ages of faith ; though what their views of morality in this respect lost in perspecuity they assuredly gained in heroism. In the estimation of our ancestors, virtue was nothing else but the preference given to what was just to what was unjust, whatever that preference might have cost. It is true we find them following in Plato’s steps, to show that the unjust must be of necessity not only more laborious, but also more unpleasant than the just and holy life †. “ Remember” says John Picus of Mirandola, “ that it is far sweeter to conquer a temptation, than to consent to the sin to which you are inclined ; and in this many are deceived, because they do not compare the sweetness of victory to the sweetness of sin, but they compare the battle to the pleasure : and yet the man who has a thousand times tried what it is to yield to temptation, ought

* Jamblich. de Pythagoric. Vit. cap. 31.

† De Legibus, Lib. II.

at least for once to try what it is to conquer the temptation*.” Still, while the spiritual and heroic authors of the middle ages at times speak thus, they never let pass an occasion without endeavouring to instil the spirit of sacrifice and disinterestedness into the minds of men. “Remark,” says Lewis of Granada, “that the holy Simeon sought not his own but others’ good, for he was solicitous rather for the salvation of others than of himself. ‘Expectabat enim consolationem Israël,’” for which, too, St. Ambrose commends him, saying, “Well did the just man, because he sought, not his own safety, but that of the people; whereas men in this world live only for themselves, and while their own affairs prosper, they think it no concern of theirs though the sky should fall, or the earth be consumed with fire†.”

“As charity is the life of all virtue, so” continues St. Catherine of Sienna, “self-love, which destroys charity, is the execrable source of all evils. All scandals, cruelties, hatreds, and miseries, proceed from that venomous root. This detestable love mortally wounds the universal world, and infects with disease the mystical body of the holy Church, all whose virtues spring from charity‡.”

St. Peter being in glory upon the top of Mount Thabor, wished for three tabernacles there, one for Christ, one for Moses, another for Elias; “and,” observes Father Diego de Stella, “never remembered himself§.”

“It seems conformable to nature,” says Giles of Colonna, “that a part should expose itself for the whole; for we see that when the head is in danger and the whole body, immediately the arm, which is a part, exposes itself wholly for the head, lest the whole body should perish. So in like manner should kings be ready to devote themselves for the people||.” This blessed doctor, even in the comparative intensity of pleasures, shows that the selfish are by nature base, and therefore places gluttony in the lowest hell. The absence of selfishness was deemed the grand remedy for all sin. “In this all doctors agree,” says St. Bonaventura, “that the cause of all malice is fear or love, and the cause of fear is self-

* Regulæ dirigentes.

† Ludovic. Grenad. In Festo Purificat. Concio IV.

‡ S. Cath. Senensis Dialog. Tractat. I. c. 7.

§ On the Contempt of the World, I.

|| Aegidius Romanus de Regim. Principum, I. l. 14.

love. How can you then sin from fear, who desire to be afflicted, and despised, and trampled upon by others? and how can you sin from love, who desire that all love should be transferred to God? Thus you will pass to perfect innocence, and the consummation of sanctity*.” All members of the ecclesiastical state were to imbibe the spirit of the example of Jesus Christ, who, as St. Bernard reminded Pope Eugene, came on earth not to do his own will. In fact, those orders of the Temple and of St. John of Jerusalem, like the religious orders in general, owed their virtues to the total eradication of selfishness from their members. No one thought of his own but of the general good, which merely formed part of the interest of the universal church. The verses of St. Columban, addressed to his monks are to this effect:

“ Non sibi quis vivat; Christo sed vivat ubique.
Non tua, sed Christi quæras, qui diligis illum.
Non te, non mundum, Christum sed dilige solum.”

Now, during the ages of faith, the spirit of the monastic orders was the spirit of perfection, to which all men knew that they were called, though its external form might depend upon their social position; and, as Richard of St. Victor says, “ perfection consisting in divine love required that men should do nothing from their own will, but commit all things to the divine disposition. All their vows, all their desires must hang on the divine nod†.” To use the language of Æschylus, all their trust was placed in *τέλειον ὑψιστον Δία*, Him who brings events to their issue‡. “The philosophers,” says St. Ambrose, “used to distinguish between the honestum and the utile, including under the latter all that related to the goods of this life. But we measure all things by the single formula of what is honest and decorous, ‘nihilque utile nisi quod ad vitæ illius æternæ prosit gratiam definimus, non quod ad delectationem præsentis §.’” In Paradise, too, Dante represents the saints as still having more regard to the blessedness of others than of their own. Thus, describing the amen which followed from either choir,

* Stimul. Amoris, Pars. II. 6.

† De Gradibus Violentæ Charitatis.

‡ Eumenid. 28.

§ S. Ambrosii Officiorum, Lib. I. cap. 9.

when told that their dead bodies should be restored to them, he adds, that it arose

“ Not for themselves, but for their kindred dear,
Mothers and sires, and those whom best they lov'd,
Ere they were made imperishable flame*.”

I am aware, indeed, that in the very lives of the saints themselves, and in the whole ground of their sanctity, the modern philosophers imagine that they discover the action of the principle which is condemned by them in theory. They believe them to be eminent in the qualities which they cultivate from selfish motives; and repeat the suggestion respecting Job, “ numquid Job frustra timet Deum?” concluding with Epictetus, that we generally find piety where there is utility.

“ Of a truth,” says the good Franciscan, John of Bordeaux, after citing these words, “ He does not approach to the purity of Christianity: he pretends that piety takes its birth in utility, so that it is interest which gives rise to devotion. Yes, among the profane, but not among Christians, who, being acquainted with the maxims of our holy religion, have no other end but to serve God, for his love and for his glory; forgetting all considerations of their own advantage, they aspire to attain to that devotion which is agreeable to Him, without any view to their own interest†.”

Only observe what passes around you. Is it when men are thinking of themselves and of their own temporal interests that they approach to the Christian mysteries? No, but they repair to them either to exercise or to acquire the spirit of self-sacrifice. It is when they are in a disposition to give up every thing, honour, esteem, and life itself, that the altar of God has an attraction which they cannot resist. Some modern philosophers have remarked this fact, and their admiration does them infinite honour, though their explanation is deficient.

“ All these men,” says Fichte, “ martyrs, confessors, apostles of nations, heroes, conquerors, men of science, all have sacrificed their personal existence for an idea. What was their reward? They have gained an entrance into a new vital atmosphere, of intellectual clearness and translucency, which makes them utterly incapable of

* XIV.

† Epictet. Chrest. 233.

enjoying a life in any other element of being. They need no compensation, they have gained an inestimable prize.” He discerns that it was the spirit of self-sacrifice which produced all this. “For who,” he continues, “were the foremost in giving the countries of modern Europe a shape in which they were worthy to be the abode of civilized nations? History makes answer: they were religious men, who, in the stedfast belief that it was the will of God that the wild fugitive in the woods should be brought to a life of order, and to the blessed knowledge of a benevolent duty, left the lands of their birth, and all the sensuous and spiritual gratifications they afforded; left their families, their friends, and kindred, encountered want and hardship, and often died the death of martyrs, and all this for the sake of an idea, and in this idea for the sake of mankind.”

“And should any object to me, that they sacrificed their present life in the expectation of an infinitely higher beatitude in heaven, which they hoped to earn by their endurance and their toil, that is, that they sacrificed one pleasure to another, the less to the greater, so that they cannot justly be deemed to have acted in the spirit of self-sacrifice, I would entreat such an objector well to weigh the following considerations. How did they attain to this firm faith in another world, a faith which they attested by their sacrifices? And what, in fact, is this faith, considered as an act of the soul? Does not the soul, which assumes the undoubted existence of another world, and clings to it with an immovable faith, in this very act make a sacrifice of the present world? And is not this faith of itself the sacrifice completed and fulfilled once for all within the soul? which inward act of the spiritual life is afterwards made manifest in a variety of outward actions. Granting that there is nothing at all marvellous in their sacrificing everything, after they once believed in an everlasting life; granting that it is all perfectly intelligible, and that the objector himself would do the same in the same situation; the marvel, however, is, that they did so believe; and this, the slave of self and sense, who is incapable of withdrawing his eyes from the present world, will never be able to do; he will never be able to put himself into the same situation!” So far the German philosopher who has had the advantage of finding one, perhaps, still greater than himself, to give his

thoughts expression in our language. The Catholic religion, however, enabled men to place the question on a clearer basis, and to determine it with more precision and justice.

The spiritual guides of the middle ages left men no choice between the contending opinions of the ancients, respecting the motives and end of virtuous actions. "All will void of the will of God, that is," continues the author of *Theologia Germanica*, "all self-will, and whatever proceeds from self-will, is sin. As long as a man seeks his own good, and that which is best for himself as his own good, and as for himself, that he never finds; for as long as he seeks thus, he does not seek what is best for himself, so far is he from finding it; for as long as a man is thus disposed he seeks himself, and he thinks that himself is that greatest good: and man is not the greatest good as long as he seeks himself*." On the other hand, a man should love himself in God. Here the religious innovators went again astray, and then came the sophists, beginning by an extravagance, and because it is true that the best men thus love themselves, concluding that they love only themselves: from all which absurdity the Catholic school was free. Thus we find it was reserved for Christian moralists, and those too, during the ages of monastic learning, to decide that abstruse question respecting the motives of action which so much perplexed and divided the ancients, and which the apostate of Erfurt revived in a new form, deciding it directly in contradiction to the unerring text. Cicero, after remarking that the stoics separated what was honest from what was convenient, "non nomine, sed genere toto," and that the Peripatetics combined them together, proceeds to add with more judgment and acuteness than modern philosophers have evinced in relation to the same point, "hæc est non verborum parva, sed rerum permagna dissensio†." That difference should now be considered as for ever set at rest, by the Catholic philosophers. Manzoni considers what ought to be the rational idea of disinterestedness as opposed to the exaggerated and chimerical sense which is sometimes attached to it, in order to ascertain what influence self-interest should exercise in morality; for Sismondi condemned the Catholic motive

* Cap. 42.

† De Nat. Deorum, Lib. I. 7.

of giving alms for the sake of one's own soul. "Remark," says Manzoni, "the progress of this exaggeration within the mind which commits it. Disinterestedness," it begins, "is shown when to perform a just action, a man sacrifices some present pleasure, or incurs some pain which he might have avoided. The greater the sacrifice the more disinterested is the action, and vice versâ. All the pleasures which may enter for motives to the action, will diminish its merit, and give it a character of egotism. All the pleasures and the hopes of pleasure, of whatever order or in whatever time, all that in the last analysis signifies pleasure, as promises, rewards, felicity, will render it less disinterested and consequently less virtuous." Here begins the error which is against an eternal law of the human soul, against a condition of intelligence and of justice,

*τις γὰρ ἐσθλὸς οὐχ αὐτῷ φίλος **;

or, as the English Sophocles saith, "Love, loving not itself, none other can." This doctrine proposes as perfection what is impossible. The condemnation which is associated with the idea of pleasure arises only from knowing that there are many pleasures opposed to duty. To push this condemnation to the general idea of pleasure, is to employ a noble sentiment to authorize an error and to reject an idea, although it is separated from the quality which alone made it worthy of rejection. When the word interested is transferred to the future life, it assumes wholly a different signification. What does a Christian mean by the good of his soul? Considering it in another life he means a felicity of perfection, a repose which consists in being absolutely according to order, in loving God fully, in having no other will but his; in being exempt from every grief because exempt from every inclination to evil; and with regard to the present life he means a felicity of progress to perfection, an advance in order and in the hope of joining the other state. This is the sense of the profound admonition of St. Paul to Timothy, "Pietas autem ad omnia utilis est, promissionem habens vitæ quæ nunc est, et futuræ." It is impossible to propose a more noble view for the moral conduct of man †.

* *Œdip. Col.* 275.

† *Osservaz. sulla Morale Cattolica*, 239.

I think it has now been shown clearly that the morality of the ages of faith was heroic, and that its heroism so far from resembling the extravagance of modern writers, was as rational and solid as it was generous. Let us pass on to consider other features essential to the morality of the Catholic church.

CHAPTER VII.

AT the time when Charlemagne was entrenched on the banks of the Ora at Wolmerstede, in East Saxony, the infidel prince Wedekind is related to have repaired to the royal camp in the disguise of a beggar, not through fear, as he was then reconciled, but in order to scrutinize the manners of the Christians. The paschal solemnities were at hand, and the king and all the host were commemorating the Lord's passion. Having crossed the river he joined the multitude of poor persons who daily flocked to court, but on the holy day of Easter when he applied for alms, he was recognized, and asked by the king what were the motives which had induced him to come in a manner so unworthy of his rank. He confessed that it was curiosity which had prompted him, in order to examine into their lives and customs. "Permit me now," said he, "most serene king, to demand what is it that hath this day so much delighted you? You appeared during the last few days wholly cast down, oppressed with sorrow, and I could not discover the cause, and lo, I beheld you this morning in your temple full of gladness and rapture, and so sudden and complete a change excites my astonishment?" The king then explained to him the great mysteries of faith, and showed him the ground of his lamentation and of his joy *. This little narrative will prepare you, reader, for the observations that I have now to offer; for you may perceive from it

* Alber Krantzii Metrop. Lib. I.

that sensible and deep impressions were made upon the minds of men during the ages of faith by supernatural motives ; and it is my present object to show that the justice imparted to those who hungered and thirsted after perfection in this life was divine, and the whole tenor of morality of ages of faith, supernatural both in its motives and in its effects, superior and even perhaps sometimes contrary to what men would have conceived or practised, if left without the assistance of an express and positive revelation of their Creator's will. For though the natural law is promulgated to man as soon as he comes to the use of reason *, and though he is wisely exhorted, by poets as well as by philosophers, to withdraw himself from ways that run not parallel to nature's course, yet in consequence of the incapacity of that law to meet the disarrangement introduced by sin into the original order, and from the uncertainty in which he stands respecting what is the direction of nature's course, from which corrupt passions are continually drawing him aside, a new law had become necessary for the government and restoration of his fallen state, and additional light was required to enable him to discern what was the original design, and the true principles, the observance of which was indispensable for the perfection and felicity of his nature. Savanorola was true to the Catholic faith in teaching the philosophers of Italy, that the Christian life could not have its roots in the natural love of man, or in the sensitive parts of his nature, or in the imagination ; nor again in the natural light of reason, for then faith would be only an opinion, nor in the influence of any natural cause, since the whole Christian life is spiritual, and independent of the body, and capable of universal practice ; but that the root and foundation of the Christian life, is the grace of God, which is a supernatural gift infused into the soul. This was the Catholic doctrine acutely maintained. Those, indeed, whom, as the church says, “ God had purged from all ancient corruption, and rendered capable of the holy novelty †,” had not cast off the grace and beauty of nature. The natural law was not abrogated ; for to have supposed that God does not require its observation would have been the same thing as

* Ligorio Theolog. Lib. I. Tract. I.

† Third Collect for Holy Week.

to suppose that it had no existence, which is absurd *. That the Christian character, though in this sense supernatural, retained all that was truly amiable and good in the ancient manners, is admitted in the reply of the Pagan father of Cymodoce to Lasthenes the Christian, in the celebrated work, entitled the *Martyrs*, which paints with such historical fidelity the two societies which were dividing the world. “ You appear to me,” says the admirer of the Homeric life, “ to be wholly of the ancient times, although I have not seen your words in Homer! Your silence has the dignity of that of the sages. You rise to sentiments full of majesty, not on the golden wings of Euripides, but on the celestial wings of Plato. In the midst of your sweet abundance you enjoy the graces of friendship. There is nothing about you forced or strained; all is content, persuasion, love †.” Would you see this exemplified in history? Read the public and domestic life of Ferdinand and Isabella, in the *Chronicles of Spain*, by Lucius Marinæus, the Sicilian. What admirable pictures have you there! What Homeric simplicity! What tenderness! What poesy in all the detail of manners ‡! Manzoni has admirably treated on the correspondence between Catholic morals with the natural sentiment of right and justice §, the union and harmony of which are proved by the testimony not alone of history and experience, but also of ancient philosophers.

There are Pagan moralists to whom we might have recourse in c'ler to shame the admirers of the natural and passionate character; for even the manners of the blessed meek are recommended by an ancient Aristotelian philosopher, who makes mildness consist in being able to bear insult and neglect, and in not being quickly moved to anger, but having a sweetness of address and an imperceptible tranquillity in the soul, exempt from all desire of contention. Still it is no less true, that the morality of the Catholic society during ages of faith, if conformable to nature, in its original state, or Homeric, according to the ideal of poets and philosophers, was something also beyond and often even contrary to what was actually

* La Hogue *Tractat. de Religione*, I. 2.

† Liv. 2.

‡ *De reb. Hispaniæ*, Lib. XXI.

§ *Osservazioni sulla Morale Cattolica*, cap. V.

in the thoughts of man. Real humanity and goodness can have no existence without the action of an influence superior to nature ; and this the poet discerns, saying,

—“ by grace divine,
Not otherwise, O nature ! we are thine *.”

It is men of natural virtues who fill the world with crimes and woe, for they are Passion's slaves, and therefore their virtues are not sure and constant. Homer perceived what was the highest praise, and investing his hero with divine virtue, styles him *πολύτλητον*, which is the very character that is formed by the supernatural principles of the Catholic faith, and in perfection by them alone. Christian severity and Christian love are intimate relations, and therefore to the voluntary mortifications which we observed in a former book, to those spiritual and sacramental communions with God, not as reigning in heaven, but as suffering in his passion, the justice, the divine patience of the ages of faith must mainly be ascribed. With natural indulgence, you have hatred, jealousy, pride, and cruelty, for without an initiation into the mysteries of faith, from which springs the principle of the supernatural life, what is conformable to corrupt nature, or as Pindar says, “what is natural must, generally, prevail.”

τὸ δὲ φυῆ κράτιστον ἄπαν †.

“ Hæc curare voluit Socrates, curare potest Deus. O quam miserum animal homo est,” continues Marsilius Ficinus, “ nisi aliquando evolet super hominem, commendet videlicet seipsum Deo. Deum amet propter Deum et cætera propter ipsum. Hæc unica problematum illorum solutio est, requiesque malorum †.”

“ I have remarked,” says Bossuet, “ that the apostle, speaking of those who love themselves and their pleasure, calls them ‘ men cruel, without affection, without pity ;’ and I have been often astonished at so strange a union. In fact, this blind attachment to pleasure seems at first to be something gentle, that would shun cruelty and malevolence ; but one is soon undeceived, and able to detect in this apparent gentleness, a malignant and pernicious sweet-

* Wordsworth.

† Olymp. IX.

‡ Epist. Lib. I. to Landino.

ness. When I hear voluptuous persons speak in the Book of Wisdom, I can find nothing more smiling and agreeable ; they speak of nothing but flowers and feasting, dancing and amusement. ‘ Let us crown our heads with flowers before they are faded.’ They invite all the world to partake of their pleasures. How sweet are their words ! how joyous their temper ! how desirable their company ! But attend to the conclusion of this discourse. ‘ Let us oppress the just and the poor ; let us not pardon either the widow or the orphan.’ What a change is here, Christians, and who would have expected so unpitiable a cruelty from such sweetness ? This is the genius of pleasure ; it loves to oppress the just and the poor ; the just who are contrary to it, the poor who are to be its prey *.”

The Stoicks said that the end of philosophy was to live according to nature, and the moderns, with a false idea of nature, say the same ; but Plato, with higher wisdom and greater subtilty of penetration, maintained that it was to be made conformable to God, in which position he did but forestall the fundamental law of Catholic morals. The heresy of our age is the idolizing of nature, of the creature over the Creator. Whatever, we are told, is conformable to nature, and to nature as we find it, is right. “ How times are changed !” cries a holy Benedictine of the present day, “ our fathers sometimes followed the vicious impulses of corrupt nature through weakness, in our philosophic age they are followed by system †.” “ Among nations which have departed from the principles of faith, we find,” as Ventura justly remarks, “ that ethics, and all sacred discipline, have given way along with theology, and that a certain rational system of ethics has been substituted for that which derived its force from God, in the same manner as what is so falsely termed rational Christianity, was substituted for positive, in which the private reason was not guided by divine discipline, but divine discipline by private reason ‡.” Hence the astonishment and offence evinced by the moderns whenever presented with any of the especial virtues of the Catholic morality ; for there are virtues which belong to it in a peculiar manner, having been, as it were, first

* Serm. sur l’Impénitence, finale.

† Jamin. Traité de la Lecture Chrét. 118.

‡ Ventura de Methodo Philosophandi, cap. II. art. 7.

revealed by the Gospel. The Heathens felt the same surprise when they first beheld the fruits of divine faith ; and St. Chrysostom had to show how little many who were called Christians differed from Pagans, either in their practice, or even in their notions of virtue *. The disciples of the modern school seem at the best only in the number of those amongst whom Virgil counted himself, when guiding Dante—men

“ Who the three holy virtues put not on,
But understood the rest †.”

What are their accomplishments and graces, but those of the Gentiles—probity, generosity, courage, friendship ? If they love those only who love them, what is this but to follow the impulse of nature ? No mysteries are required to teach that love ; the Gentiles practised it. When do they love their enemies, obey men for God’s sake, perform works of humility, and take up their cross ? They are generous, brave, and moral ; but so were Alci-biades, Achilles, and Julian. The heathen Saxons appeared at Rome, like their descendants at the present day, with the countenances of angels ; but what the Catholic discipline required was that men should have the minds of angels, and possess that interior life which is implied in the various supplications in the divine prayer of our Redeemer, which used to be on every tongue. St. Theresa, in her “ Way of Perfection,” examines each of these petitions, with a view to determine who are the persons that can repeat it with consistency. Clearly, it is more than mere human virtue which can justify men in calling God their father dwelling in heaven ; which can enable them truly to hallow his name, to wish for the coming of his kingdom, and the accomplishment of his will. Nature of herself feels not the want of that daily bread, nor can she unassisted plead for mercy on the ground of having herself forgiven. Instead of wishing to be delivered from temptations, she daily impels men to search for them. Nor is there any evil from which she desires to be delivered, excepting disease, loss of property, the death of the body, or other calamities to which our frail and wretched flesh is heir. True, as St. Augustin says, speak-

* On Compunction, Lib. I. cap. 4.

† Purg. VII. 31.

ing of the Romans, “they who refrain shameful lusts, not by the faith of piety emanating from the Holy Spirit, and by the love of intellectual beauty, but by the desire of human praise and glory, are not indeed holy, but less vile *.” Unquestionably there is much that is brilliant, and at times fascinating in the natural manners of men, and somewhat that seems austere and repulsive in those of Catholicism, though after all what do the virtues, and accomplishments, and transports of the worldly race amount to? These are admirable men, we are told; but what is there in them admirable, if you approach nearer? What is there enviable? Read the testimonies collected by that anatomist of melancholy, who with all his pretensions to sit alone, was himself but one of the sad choir, and then methinks you will be less anxious to institute a comparison, with the view of coming to a conclusion unfavourable to the effects of the supernatural morals inculcated by the Catholic religion. No; whenever the morality of the ages of faith is superseded by the manners of rationalism, the event, however it may be qualified, amounts, in fact, to the erecting the standard of Satan, naturally so glorious in the eyes of Adam’s evil brood, and beating down that of Christ, which is, according to the same nature, its scorn and aversion. It is the triumph of ambition over humility, of pride over meekness, of pleasure over the mourning of the just, of vain-glory over justice, of hatred over charity, of lust and excess over purity and temperance, of passion and revenge over the spirit of forgiveness, and sacrifice, and peace, in imitation of the Lamb of God; in a word, it is the substitution of human misery for the beatitude announced and everlastingly imparted by the Gospel.

Yielding to philosophy all that truth and justice required, the Catholic writers, from the beginning, declared that the morality which was to accompany and verify faith, must be in its motives, in its end, and in its discipline, something far different from what is ordinarily understood by nature, in the thoughts and language of men. The laudable Roman disposition was a favourite expression in the mouths of the heathens in St. Augustine’s time, and we hear the great doctor exclaiming, “O indoles Romana laudabilis! O offspring of the Reguli,

* De Civit. Dei, Lib. V. 13.

the Scævolas, the Scipios, the Fabricii, if any thing in you shines naturally laudable, only by true piety can it be purged and perfected *." "Si enim veræ virtutes sunt," he adds, "quæ nisi in eis quibus vera inest pietas esse non possunt †;" for the virtues which seem to be such, unless referred to God, are rather vices than virtues. However true and worthy they may be thought, yet if they be referred to themselves, and to nothing higher, they are inflated and proud, and therefore are to be judged vices, not virtues ‡. "Sometimes," says St. Augustin, "the most open vices are conquered by other hidden vices, which are thought to be virtues, in which reign pride, and a certain ruinous altitude of pleasing oneself; superbia et quædam sibi placendi altitudo ruinosa. Then only are vices conquered where they are conquered by the love of God §." This is the novel morality to which the church alludes, when she prays that men may be purified from all the encroachments of their former ways, and made capable of a holy renovation ||. This is that way of the cross, that life of obedience, that felicitous state, which is compared by the writers of the middle age to a garden of flowers, more beauteous than ever met mortal eye, and embalmed with a celestial fragrance. "Here," says Thomas à Kempis, "all things are bright, flourishing, odoriferous, and delightful. These flowers of the mysteries of Christ and his blessed mother, have so sweet an odour, so wondrous a flavour, so great a beauty, so powerful an ardour, that they expel from the languishing soul all temptation and carnal love, all anger and indignation, all envy and pride, all indolence and indifference, all hardness and perturbation, all sadness and distrust, all wickedness and deceit, all turpitude and diabolic influence, alike from a man or a woman, from a youth or an old man, from a rich or a poor man, because Christ died to heal all men and to cleanse all men from sin ¶."'

History can bear witness that in the middle ages, to every profession and mode of life there was a supernatural standard proposed, and that unless sanctified and

* De Civitate Dei, Lib. II. 29.

† Id. Lib. XIX. 4.

‡ Id. XIX. 25.

§ Id. XXI. 16.

|| Collect. 3rd fer. in holy week.

¶ Sermonum III. Pars 7.

directed by a divine motive, no state or employment was deemed secure from a fatal end. Gilles of Colonna, shows that in the government of himself, and of his family, and of his kingdom, a king must not place his happiness in pleasure or riches, or honour, or glory, or fame, or civil power, for then he would be only superficially good; but that he must place it in the love of God and in works which are the proofs of love *." "We entreat our Saviour, in whose name we are here assembled," says Alexander, abbot of the Benedictine monastery of Telesi, in the kingdom of Naples to king Roger, "that he may cause you so to govern your kingdom that you may hereafter possess the eternal kingdom. For what did it profit Saul to possess the temporal kingdom by divine will, when afterwards he lost both; or what the Roman emperors Augustus and Domitian, and others, to have reigned over the universal world? That you may avoid such an end, magnify and serve God, and study to please him, and if it be asked in what manner a king should govern so as to please God, we answer, a nation is rightly and well administered, when by the force of law all wickedness is expelled. Remember that you bear the name of king in order that all under your dominion may be governed with the censure of justice in the bond of peace. Therefore be prudent, brave, and invincible. Moreover, with all vows we entreat you to be mindful of your condition, to have in your mind the Lord your creator, to know that he is your king, who is the King of kings, and the Lord of lords, in whose hands are all the ends of the earth, who alone is to be feared and adored, in whom we live, and move, and from whose bounty you have all that you possess. In the Gospel, Truth saith to his disciples, 'Sine me nihil potestis facere;' and if we must believe that the disciples Peter and Paul, Andrew, and the other apostles, without him could do nothing, how much more all we who in comparison with them are as nothing! Let not, then, thy heart be ever lifted up like the king of Babylon, but remember David the holy king, and imitate him, who was lowly in his own eyes, who though possessed of the kingdom of Israel, without contradiction danced before the ark of the Lord. Follow this humility, that with David you may pass from

* Egid. Romanus de Regim. Princ. P. I. Lib. I.

a kingdom to a kingdom, and from an empire which ends with time, may be removed to that heavenly empire in which, with Jesus Christ our Lord, you may deserve to reign for evermore *." To this representation of the kingly office in the twelfth century the type of every other condition was analogous. In no state were mere natural virtues or natural motives deemed sufficient. "What hope have merchants?" asks the disciple in a dialogue ascribed to St Anselm. The master replies, "Small; for by fraud and perjury they acquire the greatest part of what they gain. Do they not frequently visit holy places and give great alms? They do all this in order that God may increase their goods, and that they may preserve them, and in these they have their reward; for of such men it is said, *qui confidunt in multitudine divitiarum suarum.* Like sheep they shall be brought down, and death shall feed upon them. What do you think of various artificers? Looking at the difficulties of their state, he replies, nearly all perish, for they work iniquity. Have players and jesters hope? None: for with intention they are ministers of Satan. Of them it is said, *Deum non cognoverunt: Deus sprevit eos.* The number of the saved will be few, but yet Christ will gather his elect from men of all classes, as he hath already assumed some from amongst thieves." What more legitimate in nature's eye than the pursuit of pleasure, if it can be obtained without injuring others? Yet the justice of the Catholic discipline was not satisfied with that limitation, for cupidity was defined by Raban Maur to be the desire of enjoying any thing, not on account of God †.

It is related of Atticus, that his humanity and goodness did not spring from nature alone, which we all obey, but also from learning. "He did these things," says a Roman author, "not alone through nature, but also from principle; for he had so imbibed the principles of the chief philosophers, that he made use of them to direct his life, and not for the sake of ostentation. He was a great imitator of the manners of his ancestors, and a lover of antiquity, which he understood thoroughly

* Alexand. Abb. de Rebus Gest. Rogerii.

† Rabani Mauri de Institutione Clericorum, Lib. III. cap. 13.

and explained in several books, than which nothing can be sweeter to those who have any desire of being acquainted with illustrious men." Making the proper substitutions, we may say it was thus with Catholic manners in the ages of faith. The force of traditional duties and modes of life was felt in every rank of society, so that few could wholly resist it. While it was the object of legislators to establish a harmony between the moral destiny of man and his social condition, it was felt as the honour of families to transmit from generation to generation, rules and customs, and manners corresponding to the doctrines and spirit of the Catholic church. Let us hope that the justice and propriety which belong to the genuine manners of a Catholic state, which are of custom, not of invention, social not individual, may never be worn out and forgotten amongst us, that in our cities some few aged ones may ever still be found in whom the old-time chides the new. It is not by a written law or private speculation that early hours, assiduity in the church morning and evening, simplicity and peace in all the detail of domestic life, personal familiarity with the poor, catholicity in conversation and habits of living, such as we find it in countries where it is generally diffused, can be enforced. It is by the tradition of families and the force of common opinion and example. Reader, this wish will be for yourself and for all that can make life dear to you; for after having once had experience of the supernatural manners of Catholic society, would it not be tearful, like being ejected from Paradise, and commanded to wander over a land of malediction, to be obliged to return to the cold, monotonous and uninspiring formalities of naturalism or of rationalism, as in countries which have lost faith, and to join that society in which, as its wise poet complains,—

—“To-morrow unbelied may say,
I come to open out for fresh display,
The elastic vanities of yesterday * :”

which knows of no morning sacrifice, no holy nights, no calm retreats from the world, no evening meditations in solemn churches, no smiling salutations like those of the Spaniards on entering a house, who used to begin by

* Wordsworth.

saying, “*Ave Maria purissima*,” no union of the visible and invisible in customs and views of action, no sanctification of hours, or of enjoyments, of the duties and of the regrets of life? When the sound of the bell which precedes the blessed sacrament was heard within the theatres of Madrid, spectators and actors all without exception, used to fall upon their knees. Bourgoign, who mentions this, adds, “that it is difficult not to laugh.” Unhappy the man, unhappy, if it were only because the whole type in his intelligence must be contrary to that which yields pure joy to the human heart, who at such a spectacle has smiles and disdain to hide instead of tears, and the sudden movements of veneration and love.

The supernatural character of the Catholic morality was also seen in the motives which prompted it; and here one might remark how little progress has been made in judicial virtue since the days when the duties of the Christian magistrate were taught by a Capuchin friar, Ives of Paris. We find that men of the middle ages were continually referring to religion for the cause even of political actions. When Guillaume de Villardouin was made prisoner by the emperor Michael Paleologus, he was offered his freedom, and money to purchase lands in France, if he would renounce his principality of the Morea. William at first proceeded to show that the feudal system did not leave it in his power to compromise the rights of others, but finally he was induced, after a long imprisonment, to yield three towns to the emperor. The Franks, however, in the Morea, met in general assembly, refused to ratify the cession. The duke of Athens in a noble speech, offered to become a prisoner in the place of William, but protested against surrendering the bulwarks of the Morea. “I deplore his captivity,” said he, “but such a price for his liberty would endanger the liberty of the whole people.” In conclusion he used these impressive words in reference to the example of Christ. “The supreme justice does not will that all should be sacrificed for the safety of one, but rather that one for all should perish.” The security and perseverance of the Catholic justice was another proof that it was above nature. How many men are thought to be meek merely from their being insensible to the divine honour, and untried in what regards themselves. To the false meek, to those who

are only by nature moderate and pacific, St. Bernardine of Sienna applies the prophet's words, "Tange montes, et fumigabunt." Only oppose their own will, and the least contradiction will raise a tempest where you thought had reigned a perpetual serenity. "O, what a precious good is endurance," cries Marcilius Ficinus, in his letter to John Cavalcanti. "This alone made Socrates the wisest of the Greeks: this is obtained by that view and remembrance of divine and eternal things, which renders all the glory of the world vain and vile." But in nothing does the supernaturalism of the Catholic morals appear more eminent than in their opposition to the sensual ideal, which, no doubt, furnishes the true explanation of the cause of that mortal hate otherwise unaccountable, with which the holy church of God has been always regarded by the profane. "The opposition of body and soul," as Novalis observes, "is one of the most remarkable and dangerous things. In history it has played a great part*." "All men," he adds, "are engaged in a perpetual duel†." "There is a separation," as Frederic Schlegel remarks, "not merely between ourselves and the external world, but there is a division also within ourselves, and in our inmost nature, a separation of conscience from thought. This pervades the whole of human life, both states and families, in faith and knowlege, judgment and inclinations, reason and will, reason and fancy ‡." How clearly men illuminated by holiness in the middle ages, had discerned what this philosopher speaks of, may be witnessed in the dialogue between Reason and Conscience, which Jacoponus inserts among his sublime rhapsodies §. Neither were the ancients blind to this phenomenon. The Pythagoreans used to speak of a double form of human nature inherent from generation, as if there were another animal joined to it, and hence a constant contention within ourselves ||. "Of all victories," says Clinias in Plato, "the first and best is the conquering one's self; and the most disgrace-

* Schriften, II. 314.

† Id. II. 284.

‡ Philosophie der Sprache, 23.

§ Wadding, Annal. Minorum, tom. VI. p. 83.

|| Jamblich. Adhortat. ad Philosoph. cap. 3.

ful and miserable defeat is the being conquered by one's self *.”

“ Tu si animum vicisti, potius quam animus te, est quod gaudeas.

Qui animum vincunt, quam quos animus, semper probiores cluent.”

So speaks Plautus †.

Cicero says, “ reliquum est ut tute tibi imperes : quam-quam hoc nescio quo modo dicatur, quasi duo simus ut alter imperet, alter pareat, non inscite tamen dicitur †.” Frederick Schlegel illustrates his position by referring to the dramatic development and representation of thought in the works of Plato, which has so completely assumed the conversational form, that if the superscription and name of the persons, all address and reply, and, in general, the colloquial form, were suppressed, the whole would nevertheless remain a dialogue, in which every answer suggests a new question flowing on in an alternate living stream of discourse and reply, or rather of thought and counter thought. This internal conversational form is essential to all living thought and to its delivery, so that the connected, uninterrupted discourse of one individual may be assumed as a conversation §. If we follow this dialogue with attention, we shall discover that as far as the sphere of morals is implicated, the two contending parties which agitate the external world are duly represented within ourselves. In fact they are found playing the same part, taking and retaking castles, professing war or treacherous neutrality, overthrowing or restoring thrones within the little world of each man's soul. In this spiritual contest they of the holy discipline are all like the Greeks of Homer.

*οἶσιν ἄρα Ζεὺς
ἐκ νεότητος ἔδωκε καὶ ἐξ γῆρας τολυπεύειν
ἀργαλέους πολέμους ||.*

The regard which the Romans entertained for chastity appears in the laws relative to the sanctuary of Fortuna Muliebris.

“ In the pagan rites,” says St. Augustin, “ it is said

* Plato, de Legibus, I.

† Trinum. II. 2.

‡ Tuscul. II. 20.

§ Id. 60.

|| II. XIV. 85.

there were, I know not what whispers breathed into the ears of a few and delivered as a secret religion, that chastity and probity of life should be pursued *. When and where," he adds, "they heard the precepts of sacred celestial chastity we know not †." The Greek poet styles chastity "the most beautiful gift of the gods."

*στέργοι δέ με σωφροσύνα,
δώρημα κάλλιστον θεῶν ‡.*

But the Christian revelation threw a new light upon the mysteries of our moral nature. "Although," says St. Augustin, "there are so many different nations on the earth, living according to different rites and manners, and distinguished by variety of languages, arms, and habits; yet there are not more than two races of human society existing, which we may call two cities; the one consisting of men who live after the flesh, and the other of those who live after the spirit §."

The passions, indeed, given to us with life, as long as they remain pure and unabused, are under the protection of angels; but no light unearthly is required to show that when corrupted or misdirected, they are subjected to the empire of daemons, and made the ready instruments of every error and vanity that oppose themselves to justice. Thus reason suffices to teach that there is a virtuous love and a guilty love, a pernicious anger, and a holy anger, a criminal pride and a noble sense of dignity. But those whom Christ had repaired by the new light of his immortality could see farther. The flight of Christian souls was higher still; for that belief in millions of spiritual creatures walking the earth unseen, both when we wake and when we sleep, those images, those chaunts, those crowns and reliquaries guarding the soul from the poisoned shafts of the impure daemon, as if with a buckler of diamonds, that cleanliness of heart which suggests that revolted spirits must seem to resemble even in shape and outward signs their sin and place of doom obscure and foul, that affirmation of the prophet, "ye are gods, and all sons of the Most High," that maxim of the bright school, "Christianus alter

* De Civit. Dei, Lib. II. 6.

† II. 26.

‡ Eurip. Medea, 635.

§ De Civitate Dei, Lib. XIV. cap. 1.

Christus," without doubt produced an ideal of humanity corresponding to what was in the mind of God rather than to what was in the mind of man. Men of genius like Sir Philip Sidney, who set themselves, as in his letter to Queen Elizabeth, "against papists," indulged their imagination in the absence of the beauties of the angelic life, by forming the ideal of sensual excellence, as may be witnessed in his essay, entitled, "Valour Anatomized." This has always been and must ever continue the policy of those who attack the Catholic religion. Material is thus opposed to spiritual beauty, though the first is indebted to the latter for the attraction which it uses as a snare. As Novalis remarks, "the ideal of morality has no more dangerous rival than the ideal of the highest strength of the most powerful life, which is also termed the ideal of greatness. It is the maximum of barbarism :" so foreign to the spirit of the middle ages, that a great guide of the thirteenth century declared it more detestable to be intemperate than timid * : "but in these times of irregular cultivation, it has many adherents even amidst the utmost weakness. Through this ideal man would acquire a brute spirit and a brute intelligence † ." Through this every thing belonging to the holy discipline of faith is seen in a distorted shape ; "O mortal lust ! that canst not lift thy head above the waves which whelm and sink thee down ‡ ." At present the ideal of humanity in the whole development of human genius is animal, in the ages of faith it was angelical, and this of itself is quite sufficient to explain the difference between the manners and creations of the middle ages, and those of the modern civilization ; for the great heresy of latter times has been a gross application to manners of the principle of Jordano Bruno, who inculcated the identification of God with nature, that is, with nature in its present state. Many of the faithful seem not to be aware that if they consider their own ideal by the light of unimpassioned reason, and even by that of the ancient philosophy, they would find it amply justified. Novalis, whose remarkable writings may be said to represent the testimony of the human intelligence, says, "We must keep the body as well as the soul in our power. The

* Cœgid. Rom. de Regim. II. 1. 16. † Schriften, II. 285.

‡ Dante, Hell, XXVII.

body is the instrument to form and modify the world : we must seek to form our body to all capacities. Modification of this is the modification of the world *." The Pythagoreans were exhorted to beware of pleasure as of a thing requiring the utmost caution, the source and instigator of all deceit and sin †. Aristotle said, that " it is brutish to indulge and delight in sensual pleasures, and that the most generous natures voluntarily refrain from them ‡." He shows that the grand object of virtue is to resist pleasure, since it is still more difficult to fight against pleasure than against anger, according to Heraclitus. *περὶ δὲ τὸ χαλεπώτερον αἰεὶ καὶ τέχνη γίνεται καὶ ἀρετή* §. From the works of Plato a sublime defence might be derived for those features of Catholic morals which seem most repugnant to the feelings of flesh and blood. Socrates, in that magnificent passage at the end of the Gorgias, where he describes the punishment of the wicked after death, says, " that the souls which have been defiled with lust and avarice, will then appear horribly disfigured, as if with great scars and wounds which these vile passions had left imprinted on them ||." Dionysius praises the manners of the first Romans on account of their abstemious life, being hardened against all enjoyment of pleasure; and for their having estimated happiness by virtue not by fortune ¶. In expressing his admiration for Romulus, observing how austere he was, and how he hated all crime, he concludes with this remarkable expression, *καὶ πολλὴν ἔχουσα πρὸς τοὺς ἡρωϊκὸν βιους ὁμοιότητα* **. In fact, according to Pindar it was the boast of Achilles, the type of heroism, that he had been imbued with the learning of Chiron, and that he had passed the first twenty years of his life in a cave, where he was educated by the chaste daughters of the centaur, to whom he never even uttered an unseemly word ††.

Without doubt the heathen moralist in general knew little of that trial to which Hugo of St. Victor alludes, when he says that youth has to bear the burden and heat

* Schriften, II. 157.

† Jamblich. de Pythagoric. Vita, cap. 31.

‡ Ethic. Nic. Lib. III. cap. 10.

§ Id. Lib. II. 3.

|| Plato, Gorgias.

¶ Antiquit. Roman. Lib. II. c. 11.

** Il. c. 24.

†† Id. Pyth. Od. IV.

of the day, materially the weight of labour and heat of the sun, and morally the weight of the carnal fragility and heat of concupiscence*. Yet Euripides, in drawing the character of Hippolytus, furnished proof that the Greeks were capable of conceiving the beauty of such a character as that of a young man wholly innocent, unwilling to pollute his ears or eyes with anything against modesty, *παρθένον ψυχὴν ἔχων* †. Nay, how well they understood the importance of guarding the senses with a view to the preservation of such virtue, may be collected from the double signification of the word *κόρη* with the Greeks, and the alliance between pupillæ and pupulæ with the Latins. We, indeed, have abundant testimonies from ancient authors, to the excellence of many of the supernatural features of Catholic manners during the ages of faith. Cicero, after alluding to the internal division which involves the necessity of self government, adds, “*Est in animis omnium fere natura molle quiddam, demissum, humile, enervatum, quodammodo et languidum, senile. Si nihil aliud, nihil esset homine deformius*‡.” And yet this is what the modern sophists would teach youth to follow! “*Arrianus Maturius est princeps*,” says Pliny, “*quum dico Princeps, non de facultibus loquor, sed de castitate, justitia, gravitate, prudenteria* §.” The ancient philosophers even admit expressly the necessity of placing morals upon a supernatural basis, and of imparting motives to action higher than the mere principles of humanity. Varro thought it useful that brave men should fancy themselves sprung from the gods. “The human mind,” he said, “in consequence of that persuasion, would undertake greater things, pursue them with more ardour, and perfect them with greater felicity.” We no where meet with an idea of morality independent of sacrifice and the fear of the Deity. Hermippus says that Chiron the Centaur first led the race of mortals to justice, teaching them oaths and propitiatory sacrifices, and *καὶ σχῆματ' Ολύμπον*||.

It is a singular fact, that even for the institution of confession, apparently so beyond mortal ken, there might be testimonies produced from some of the ancient philo-

* *De Claustro Animæ, Lib. II. 14.*

† 1006. ‡ *Tuscul. II.* § *Epist. Lib. III. 2.*

|| *Clemens Alexand. Stromat. Lib. I. c. 15.*

sophers. Plato enforces the duty of disclosing one's sin and injustice to others; and Plutarch speaks as follows, in his treatise entitled, "How to perceive one's Progress in Virtue." "As for those who voluntarily give themselves up to the men that will reprove them, who confess their errors, and who disclose their own poverty, not being at ease until it be known, not wishing to be secret, but confessing and praying those who reprove and admonish them to prescribe a remedy, such a conduct is certainly not one of the worst signs of amendment and of progress in virtue."

To this divine principle, which produced such an influence on Catholic manners, our attention must now be directed, which is an inquiry that will not lead us aside from the path of an historian; for the learned Scotti, in his Theory of Christian Politicks, remarks justly, that it is often necessary for a writer on civil government to enter upon doctrinal discussions, as in the very instance which calls for that observation, where he shows the utility which the state derives from the doctrines of purgatory and indulgence. There is no historian of Charles the Fifth, who has not been obliged to notice the curious petition of his Lutheran subjects, that by his imperial authority men might be compelled to return to the ancient discipline of confession, when experience had taught them that its abolition produced a visible deterioration in morals, and opened a prospect of interminable evils to society. To this point now, reader, let us therefore turn, and mark how just God decrees our debts be cancelled.

CHAPTER VIII.

IN the symbol of our faith, immediately after the commemoration of the holy church, we find mention made of the remission of sins, because, as St. Augustin says, "it

is only in fact by means of the remission of sins, that the church on earth can subsist*." Christ instituted the sacrament of penitential confession, and gave to men a power which belonged not to the angels, and which equalled his own, saying, "As my Father sendeth me, so send I you; whose sins you forgive, they are forgiven; and whose sins you retain, they are retained;" words, which though never interpreted but in one sense by the Catholic church, have visibly embarrassed the great writers of other schools, from whose commentaries no one can ascertain what they thought respecting them, and who probably, indeed, had not a clear idea themselves of what they would maintain. The Catholic church, as the Master of the Sentences says, has always claimed and exercised the power of binding and loosing, which power is permitted to priests alone. "Rightly," saith he, "does the church which has true priests claim this authority, but heresy cannot claim it, which has not true priests†." Some have questioned the nature and method of confession in the primitive church, but it is clear from St. Cyprian, that men then confessed their thoughts‡. Minucius Felix, addressing the idolators, says, "apud nos et cogitare peccare est; vos, conscos timetis, nos etiam conscientiam solam, sine qua esse non possumus." It appears also that converts from heresy, like the old hermit Isidore, in the early church, used to confess the horrible secret sacrileges which they had committed against the blessed sacrament §. "Grave vulnus est," says St. Augustin, "lethale, mortiferum; sed omnipotens medicus||." "No one," says Origen, "must blush to indicate his sin to the priest of the Lord, and to seek the medicine ¶." "What doth it signify," says St. Ambrose, "whether by penitence or by the washing of baptism, the priests vindicate this right granted to them? it is one and the same mystery in both, for the name of God worketh in penitence, as the grace of mysteries in baptism**." St. Cyprian speaks of every one confessing his sins to the priests ††; but after the fourth Council of Lateran, confession be-

* Enchirid. cap. XVII.

† Lib. IV. Sentent. distinct. 18, 19.

‡ Tract. de Lapsis.

§ Sophronii Pratum Spirit. cap. XXX.

|| Serm. CCCLII.

** Lib. I. de Poenitentia, cap. 8.

¶ Hom. II. in Levit.

†† De Lapsis, XII.

came more frequent among the faithful, and chiefly by means of the exhortation of the regular clergy. When Dante was at Ravenna, the laity were admonished by the decrees of Rainaldo the archbishop, to have recourse to the sacraments at least on eight festivals in the year*, but this was merely fixing a minimum, to ascertain who were worthy of the name of Christians. When the number of confessors was increased, it became expedient to compile books for their guidance, such as the Confessional of St. Bonaventura, and the sum of St. Raymond of Pennafert; though these were not altogether a novelty, for penitentials of the highest antiquity may be found in various collections. By means of these works the priest, without being obliged to recur to the canons, had everywhere a sure rule for his conduct in the important action of imposing the penance appropriate to each sin. The moderns, in condemning books of this kind, had against them even their own most esteemed authority. "I commend much," says Lord Bacon, "the deducing of the law of God to cases of conscience†."

St. Raymond the Dominican, in the thirteenth century, may upon the whole be considered as author of the first sum of moral theology. His work was excellent, but in subsequent times, many writers who undertook to form similar collections, treated the subject in such a manner as to provoke the censures of the church. Mabillon scrupled not to prefer to some of them the book of Cicero De Officiis‡. In this, however, he referred to obscure compilations, for the accusations which a celebrated philosopher adduced against some of the noblest and most perfect treatises, were ungrounded and calumnious.

The Pere Daniel, in reply to the provincial letters, has convicted Paschal of having falsified the text of the authors which he quoted, of having ascribed to them the opinions which they proposed only for the purpose of refutation, and of having condemned as novelties the doctrines of the holy fathers and of the Scripture. Assuredly such men as Azor, Saurez, Vasquez, Lessius, and Sanchez, needed not the light of Port Royal to reject the atrocious errors which he denounced with such elo-

* Hieron. Rubei Hist. Raven. Lib. VI.

† Advancement of Learning.

‡ De Studiis Monast. Pars II. cap. VII.

quence*. The Marchioness of Sablé, who was then encompassed by it, asked Paschal on one occasion, if in reality he was sure that all he had written against the Jesuits was just? To whom he replied, "That it was for those who furnished him with the memoranda on which he worked to examine that point, and not for him who did nothing but arrange the materials which were placed in his hands." This is that sage sublime, the renown of whose great name hath echoed through the world, as if through his lips justice had once a voice on earth. Now, let his disciples say whether he needeth nothing but their praise.

Of public penance, there are memorable examples in history. Pope Fabian closed the church doors against the Emperor Philip, as did St. Martin against the Emperor Maximus, St. Ambrose against Theodosius, and St. Germain against King Aribert, until they were reconciled and made public confession. Louis le Debonnaire asked permission to perform public penance. It was then for the first time since the early examples, that one saw the great spectacle of the voluntary humiliation of a man invested with the supreme power. "This," says Michelet, "was a new era of morality, the accession of conscience." Nevertheless the brutal pride of men blushed for royalty at the humble confession which it made of its own weakness†; and there have not been wanting historians in modern times to convert such examples, and, indeed, the whole discipline of penitence, into ground for accusing the clergy of tyranny and pride, forgetting the obvious truth which Plato develops, that it is not consistent with nature that the pilot of a ship should ask the consent of the sailors to be directed by them, nor that the wise should go to the door of the rich. And he who can deliver such conceits, adds the great philosopher, lies; but nature commands that if a rich or a poor man be sick, that he should go to the door of the physician; and, in like manner, whatever is to be directed, must apply to those who are able to direct ‡.

Already, in another book, having spoken of the penitential exercises observed during the ages of faith, there is no occasion to dwell at present on the historical view

* Entretiens d' Eudoxe et de Cleandre.

† Hist. de France, I. 362.

‡ De Repub. Lib. VI.

of this subject; let us pass on, therefore, to philosophize briefly respecting the advantages of this institution, and to consider the objections to which it has given rise.

What is the state of man?—a wayfarer on earth, a member of the militant church, left with liberty, called to perfection, encompassed with obstacles, and having a two-fold evil to combat? What is the probability of his obtaining that prize which is for the few who conquer, and of his being admitted to those regions of purity and imperishable joy into which nothing that is defiled can ever enter? Let us hear the axiom of the middle ages, “Quidquid fit contra conscientiam ædificat ad gehennam*.” Yet St. Augustin makes a reflection still more appalling than this of Innocent. “Væ peccatis hominum,” he exclaims, “qui sola inusitata exhorrescimus, usitata vero, pro quibus abluendis Filii Dei sanguis effusus est, quamvis tam magna sint, ut omnino claudi contrasese faciant regnum Dei, sæpe videndo omnia tolerare, sæpe tolerando nonnulla etiam facere cogimur†.”

St. Clemens Alexandrinus quotes an ancient poet, saying,

ὅ βίος ἀνθρώποις λογισμοῦ κάριθμοῦ δεῖται πάνυ·
ζῶμεν ἀριθμῷ καὶ λογισμῷ ταῦτα γὰρ σώζει βροτούς.

and, again, what is more remarkable from a Gentile,

οὐ γὰρ ἀνθρωπος τέχναν εὗρ', οὐ δὲ θεὸς ταύταν φέρει.
οὐ δέ γε τάνθρωπου λόγος πέφυκ' ἀπὸ τοῦ θείου λόγου‡.

It is even so. “Man has not judgment to direct his life,” as Richard of St. Victor saith. “The quality of works deceives him, as when the prophet says, ‘Væ qui dicitis bonum malum et malum bonum.’ And he errs also in his estimate of quantity, to which the Psalmist alludes, when he saith, ‘Mendaces filii hominum in stateris, ut decipient ipsi de vanitate in id ipsum.’ Who will find me a man that never errs in his estimate of quality or of quantity, who is never circumvented by the occupation—walking in darkness? Who neither wishes to be deceived nor to deceive? But where can man attain to this degree of judgment, while involved in darkness and dwelling in the region of the shadow of death? Truly

* Innocent III. in cap. litteras de Rest. Spol.

† Enchirid. cap. 70.

‡ Stromat. Lib. V. 14.

this is impossible for every man, so long as the darkness rests on the face of the abyss, until He who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, emitting his light and his truth, shall begin to divide light from darkness, and to make evening and morning, in order that man may be able to discern good from evil, and evil from good, good from better, and evil from worse, better from best, and worse from worst? Without supernatural help men cannot make "the first step in the way of discretion," which is to judge between day and night, that is, between good and evil. How, without a personal and authoritative application of the unerring text made through the sacrament of penance, can they hope to make the second, between night and night, or worse and evil, worse and worst; the third, between day and day, that is, between good and better, better and best; the fourth, which is to judge every night, or to know what is each sin; and the fifth, which is to judge every day, or to estimate justly every virtue *? "Every hour," continues this great philosopher, "yea, each moment we are deceived in our estimation of things, and breaking the reins of equity we run loose to our desires. No moderation, no certain measure is preserved, while the mind is impelled to and fro, as in a whirlwind, by the impulse of the flesh. From the sole of the foot to the crown of the head there is no soundness. Happy the time, and desirable the hour, when no longer will any thought be deceived in its examination, any affection bridled in its desires†." "Moreover," he continues, "it is one thing to discuss what is good or evil in itself, and another to deliberate what is expedient or not to some one individual. Find me," saith he, "a man who can show me some one thing which cannot be the cause of any evil to any one. What is there so good that it cannot be the occasion of fall, or what so evil that it cannot be an admonition of caution? Behold, therefore, how every heart is darkened to counsel ‡."

Against the dangers of this state of man, exposed to the impulse of his own heart and to the action of an external seducer, the Catholic church has been provided with a remedy in the sacrament of confession, by which

* Richardi S. Victoris de Statu Interioris Hominis, Lib. I. 1. c. 25, 26. † Id. I. 1. c. 34. ‡ Id. I. 1. c. 28.

men are not alone loosed, but directed and advised. The priest had a judicial power supernatural, but, besides that, he was in a position from which he could determine what was best for the penitent, who for himself might never have been able to determine with justice, since his mind would still be a mirror that reflected only himself. Always provided with a certain, positive rule of judging, the priest had a knowledge of human nature, beyond what could be possessed by other men.

“ Often, too,
Through the long experience of his dayes,
Which had in many fortunes tossed beene,
And past through many perillous assayes,
He knew the diverse went of mortall wayes
And in the mindes of men had great insight ;
Which with sage counsell, when they went astray
He could enforme, and them reduce aright
And all the passions heale, which wound the weaker spright*.”

Will you hear those who speak from experience? “Woe to the man,” cries Silvio Pellico, “ who rejects confession, and who in order not to appear vulgar, thinks himself obliged to treat it with sarcasm. Is it not true, you ask, that as every one says, one ought to be good, it is useless to hear it repeated without ceasing? that meditation and reading suffice to the wants of the soul? No; the burning word of man has a power which neither reading nor meditation possess. The soul is more moved by it, the impressions from it are more profound. The voice of a brother hath a life and an applicability to the moment which we do not find either in our own thoughts, or in our books †.” You find this mystery explained in the old verses of Alanus de Insulis—

“ Diversis diversa valent medicamina morbis :
Ut variant morbi, sic variantur ea.
Non uno doctrina modo se mentibus infert ;
His timor, his monitis, his adhibetur amor.”

Spenser paints the spiritual physician in the act of administering to the diseased soul :

* Spenser, VI. 6.

† Le Mie Prigioni, cap. LXXXIV.

" Then gan the palmer thus, ' most wretched man,
 That to affection does the bridle lend :
 In their beginning they are weake and wan,
 But soone, through suff'rance, growe to fearefull end,
 Whiles they are weake, betimes with them contend *.' "

But what is to be said of that examination of the heart, and of that scrutiny of secret sins, which the practice of confession implied, and which the moderns represent as injurious to the freshness and purity of the mind? There are not wanting books to enable us to determine this question practically †; but in relation to history, we can best answer it from consulting the writers of the middle ages. Hugo of St. Victor, developing that every man is in Egypt by the consideration of himself, in the land of Irael by the contemplation of God, and in Judæa by the edification of his neighbour, says, " it is useful to fly into Egypt, and behold the darkness of our infirmity, that the mind may not swell. And if the child Jesus, and his Virgin Mother be with us, the darkness will not overwhelm us; but though we should walk through the midst of the shadow of death, we shall fear no evils. Let us fly, then, into Egypt, and remain there till the death of Herod, till the end of our pride and our elation ‡." How great is the inconsistency of men! Those who object to the scrutiny of the heart in the secrets of confession, as a means of advancing to perfection, are generally the very persons who are addicted to resting in that view of themselves, without any farther object than to indulge in the vain pleasure or the sullen discontent inspired by what they find there. This was a weakness and a danger foreign from the Catholic morality. Under its influence men did not write books to paint themselves, in order that their image might be then admired and adored by others. God only was to be adored in the heart of man §. Even for good they did not rest in self-contemplation. " Return to yourself," says Richard of St. Victor, " and keep your heart; but woe to you, if you remain there, instead of passing on to seek the high-

* Book II. 4.

† Vide Drexelii Trismegistus Christianus, de Cultu Conscientiae.

‡ Hugo S. Vict. ex Miscellan. Liv. III. 60.

§ Malebranche, Recherche de la Verité, Liv. II. c. 5.

est good, which is God. Pass on ; despise yourself, and you will realize the departure of Israel out of Egypt *." The human heart is an abyss of mystery, if you will only credit Homer, who says, " Many things obscure, Thes- torides, but nought obscurer than the mind of man † ;" and what dangers arise from it no one need be told. We have to contend not only against the passions of the body, but also against those of the mind. " In libidine esse, peccatum est etiam sine effectu." This is what even the Gentile moralist affirmed ‡. " The first study of a manly mind," says Richard of St. Victor, " ought to be how to govern its affections ; and the second, how to command its thoughts §." " Who can worthily apprehend," he continues, " who can sufficiently estimate, who does not tremble with awe and admiration, when he considers that multiplex volubility of human thought, that restless and unwearied velocity which traverses so many, so various, such infinite things, which rests no hour, no moment of time, which flies with such haste through so much space of locality and of ages, to which every where opens so easy a passage from the highest to the lowest, from the lowest to the highest, from first to last, and from last to first ||?" What need of a wise, and steady, and active personal direction, and what a school of wisdom may the mind be made, which is the seat of such admirable faculties? " The mind," says Richard of St. Victor, " knows nothing better, nothing more certain, nothing more sublime, than what it learns by experience, and perhaps this is the proper and especial, and above all, most sublime mode of learning, in the power of the soul, when we prove a thing by our own experience ¶." Hear how these men prescribed : " There comes into your mind," says St. Augustin, " an unlawful suggestion? It is the serpent's head: tread on it, and you will escape. But it speaks of gain, great gain, much gold: you will be rich for ever! It is the serpent's head: tread on it. Perish the world's gain, rather than that a soul be lost **."

* Richardi S. Victoris de Exterminatione Mali, Pars I. Tract. I. 6.

† Epig. VI.

‡ Cicero, de Finibus, Lib. III. 9.

§ Richard. S. Vict. de Eruditione Hominis Interioris, Lib. I. c. 2.

|| Richardi S. Victoris, de Contemplatione, L. III. c. 2.

¶ De Eruditione Hominis Interioris, Lib. I. c. 2.

** St. August. in Ps. 103.

This is what St. Benedict in his rule expresses, by dashing evil thoughts in their commencement against the rock which is Christ, according to the prophetic admonition of the Psalmist. “ Agair ” saith Hugo of St. Victor, “ many seek science, but few conscience ; yet if they would seek conscience with as much study and solicitude as they do secular and vain science, it would be sooner acquired, and more usefully retained ; for to think with conscience is consummate sense, and saving the reverence of wisdom, it is more useful to have recourse to conscience than to wisdom, unless it be that wisdom which builds up the conscience *.” That a thousand difficulties and objections, a thousand sources of bitter disgust and alienation are removed by confession, is a fact well known to the physicians of souls, who have experience of the maladies of the human intelligence. It is sin which raises all these clouds. Men have wondered at the sacred history which records that man fell for an apple. Blind and thoughtless : they read the same record, however humiliating, in their own hearts. Such is still the degradation of this marvellous piece of workmanship—man ! He falls daily for an apple, even so, for a little sugar, for a little sugar and blood. Attend to the order and progress of human perdition ; it is the Master of the Sentences who speaks : “ First God said, ‘in the day that you shall eat of it, you shall die the death.’ Then the woman said, ‘lest perchance we die.’ Lastly, the serpent said, ‘ ye shall not die.’ God affirmed ; the woman doubted ; the devil denied ; finally, the man, in compliance with Eve, consented. Now in each man continually the order and progress of temptation is the same as in the case of our first parents, and similar is the result when reason, which ought to command with authority, consents to the suggestion of passions which ought to obey, and decrees that to be done which they advise ; for then the man is expelled from all happy life, from the paradise of his mind, as if from that terrestrial garden in which he was first placed by his Maker †.” But, you will say, once instructed, what need of having these personal admonitions repeated, as the practice of frequent confession implies ? For answer to this question, hear what St. Anselm says. “ The devil is like a deceitful pleader, who

* Hugo S. Victor, de Anima, Lib. III. cap. 10.

† Pet. Lomb. Lib. II. distinct. 24.

gives false witness in court, and when rejected, returns again, after a time, with the same, pretending to have been injured, till the judge declares what was once well determined cannot be revived again. Thus the devil pleads in the heart of man, to which place he comes as to a court, and there asserts that to be true which he knows to be false, and false that which is true; for there he affirms it as a truth that a man ought to love the world, to seek riches and honour, to fulfil the desires of the flesh, all which is false. And on the other hand, he affirms it to be false that a man should leave the world and despise riches and honours, and mortify the flesh, and redeem his sins with alms, all which is proved to be true. And when any one who knows how to judge between what is right and what is wrong, hears the devil in his heart say this, he determines that what he calls just is unjust, and the converse. And then the devil departs, but afterwards he hopes that the man will have forgotten his own decree, and he returns and revives the cause, as if it had not been rightly judged *." How necessary, then, to have a counsellor and faithful fellow combatant ever at one's side, to confirm the soul in rejecting the deceitful things that may be now floating before the fatigued intelligence, and to remind it that what was once well determined ought never to be again revived. Above all, for youth in the season of so many mental and bodily passions, as Socrates says, *ὅταν δὴ περὶ αὐτὸν βομβοῦσαι καὶ αἱ ἄλλαι ἐπιθυμίαι †*, by means of what remembrance of mere general instruction can it resist? How indispensable is the teacher's high discourse, and the friendly admonitions of the sweet and holy friend, the physician of secret wounds, as St. John Climachus is styled—*vir sanctus occultorum vulnerum medicus?* for

—“ of such skill appliance needs
To medicine the wound that healeth last ‡.”

Even in a mere political point of view, who can estimate the benefits that resulted to society from the influence of spiritual directors upon kings and men in civil authority? Take but one instance. When the duchess of Milan, on

* S. Anselmi de Similitudinibus, cap. 76.

† De Repub. Lib. IX.

‡ Dante, Purg. XXV.

the death of her husband, and in the absence of her son, Galeazzo, neglected the counsels of her confessor, who was a minor friar, his superiors removed him, saying that it was in vain to send a physician to one who refused to follow his prescriptions. The duchess used every effort to have him restored, and when the vicar-general came to Milan, she prevailed on him to arrange the affair with the fathers, and in consequence a decree was issued in 1467, signed by the superiors of the province of Milan, and by the vicars of Bologna and Naples, granting to the said duchess brother Bonaventura de Pantanidis for her confessor, but on these conditions, that she should not suspend the execution of justice in civil causes, that she should diminish the superfluous expenses of her government, that she should satisfy her creditors yearly or daily, according to her ability, and that she should not oppose any obstacle to the succession of benefices *

As yet we have seen but the need of prevention and of guidance to which this divine institution corresponds. It remains to view the cure and recovery.

Although the human soul is immortal, it has nevertheless," says St. Augustin, "a kind of death belonging to it. The death of the whole man, indeed, the second death, does not take place till the soul, deserted by God, deserts the body, but the death of the soul takes place when God deserts it, as that of the body follows when deserted by the soul †."

At Florence in the days of the Medicis, the abbot Lumbo employed his skill in an admirable act, to represent the progressive stages of decomposition in the bodies of those who died of the pestilence. One turns pale if the eye catches but a momentary glance at that dreadful spectacle ; but who could pourtray the different stages of corruption in the soul's death, or could survive a glance at it ? Dante says of Satan,—

" If he were beautiful
As he is hideous now, and yet did dare
To scowl upon his Maker, well from him
May all our mis'ry flow ‡ !"

Profound words, that can teach us what effect might fol-

* Ann. Minorum, vol. XIII.

† S. August. de Civitate Dei, Lib. XIII. c. 2.

‡ XXXIV.

low. I find this idea struck Marsilius Ficinus, for in his letter to Julian the physician, he says that “if it were possible to behold the effigy of a wicked mind, one would fly from it with more speed and horror than from the sight of bodies that the plague had dispossessed of life*.” It is sufficient with the school to recognise the threefold character of moral death in relation to the three Persons of the blessed Trinity, to know that he who falls through infirmity, as Richard of St. Victor says, “is greatly contrary to Him who is the highest power, the Father; that he who sins through ignorance is opposed to him who is the highest wisdom, the Son; and that he who offends through sheer malice is the especial adversary of Him who is the highest goodness, the Holy Ghost †.” “Penance and that rite which first makes man Christian are styled the sacraments of the dead, because they transfer men from this state of death to one of spiritual life. The mother of Naïm, who was a widow, was overjoyed at her young son being raised to life again; and for men spiritually resuscitated, mother church rejoices daily ‡.” This testimony of St. Augustin might be illustrated from the moralists and even historians of the middle ages, who attest the continued action of divine grace in the same mystery of resuscitating those that were dead in trespasses and sins. Hereafter we shall be able to remain for some space with these convertites. At present it will be sufficient to cast a glance upon some and pass on. St. Bernard received so much joy at the conversion of the knight Arnulphus, that he said publicly that Jesus Christ was no less admirable in the conversion of brother Arnulphus than in the resurrection of Lazarus, considering what bonds of vice and difficulties of the world he had to break through in order to embrace a holy life. The sentiments of men in the middle ages respecting conversion to justice are very profound. Of the difficulty attending it they seem impressed with a deeper sense than later moralists. “The heart,” says St. Gregory, “must be moved from its place: the place of the human heart is the love of the world, but when touched by divine aspiration its place becomes the love of eternity.

* Epist. III.

† Richardi S. Vict. de Eruditione Interioris Hominis, L. II. c. 3.

‡ S. August. Hom. 44.

By consideration of its eternal country, the soul is as it were moved from its place *." On the other hand they found that this supernatural change was often wrought by means of circumstances that appeared to mortal eye trifling and ignoble. "Vidi semen in terram de agricultæ manu negligenter lapsum, fructum lætissimum ac plurimum tulisse." This is what St. John Climachus says, alluding to men who were converted by means of some apparently fortuitous event or unworthy motive. Salvation is of God, and he imparts it in diverse modes. "Vocat undique ad pœnitentiam, vocat beneficiis creaturæ, vocat impertiendo tempus vivendi, vocat per lectorem, vocat per tractatorem, vocat per intimam cogitationem, vocat per flagellum correptionis, vocat per misericordiam consolationis †." Bernardine Gomesius the Spanish historian, describing the tempest which befel the fleet of king James the First of Arragon, on the expedition against the Moors of Majorca, remarks, that "there is nothing more desirable than a storm at sea; for it does good," he says, "to souls, producing holy and salutary fruit of true and lively contrition, and that broken and contrite spirit which God doth never despise ‡." A certain judge entered the order of St. Francis from hearing a light jest of one who said to a swine-herd that had great difficulty to make his swine enter a stable, "tell them to enter as judges and attorneys enter hell, and you will see how they will pass in quickly." The blessed Torello de Castro Puppio, in Tuscany, when a licentious youth, was suddenly converted by means of a cock alighting from a window upon his shoulder and crowing thrice §. And what think you were the fruits of these conversions?

"When man," says St. Hildegard, "returns to his Creator like the prodigal son, he renounces the dæmon and chooses his Lord. Then all the vices of the dæmon are confounded, and all celestial harmonies are admired ||." It pleases the moderns to entertain doubts as to the possibility of having an exact knowledge of such transfor-

* S. Greg. Moral. in Job. XXVII.

† S. August. in Ps. 102.

‡ Bernardini Gomesii de Vita Jacobi I. Arragon. Lib. VI.

§ Wadding, Annal. Minorum, tom. IV. V.

|| Epist. ad Eberhard.

mations, though even the testimony of the Gentile philosophers is against them. "For my part," says Plutarch, "I think that a man who should have been transformed by the gods into a woman like Cæneus, would be more ignorant of this metamorphose, than another on being rendered temperate and brave, being transported from a bestial to a heavenly and divine life, would be ignorant of the moment when this change was effected."

During the middle ages it would seem as if the hearts of men were ever bent upon being employed as instruments to accomplish changes of this kind, and as if they continually meditated upon that sentence of Richard of St. Victor, "*Timenda est hæc nox, in qua homo quotidie fit deterior, et tamen de se securior **." Again and again are they warning friends and enemies against deferring such a work. Sometimes by terrible admonitions, saying, *Cras, cras, cras, to-morrow we shall amend,* and answering, *All our yesterdays have lighted fools the way to dusty death;* at others by tales horribly gay, which represent the subtlety of the victim practising with his own conscience, and with his guide, interpreting his promise to begin to-morrow, as always intended for a future day, till at length he is overtaken, and perishes in the moment when he is least aware. Their admonitions are always like those of Socrates to Ischomachus in Xenophon. "*It is good to begin to follow virtue from this very day, when we hear for the first time what it really is †.*" But grace must first be sought, for without it all man's efforts are in vain. The Church, indeed, to show the weakness of his nature, makes use of that expression in one of her sublime prayers. "*In hac mortalitate, te adjuvante, peccata sua defleant,*" implying that without divine aid he cannot so much as lament his sins with the tears of the elect. Nor are there wanting recitals full of terror to awaken the obdurate by revealing deep mysteries of Almighty grace. And of these I shall present one example, as it contains incidental evidence of the assiduity of the rustic population, during the middle ages, to attend to their soul's health. "In the year 1464, a thing happened worthy of being

* Richardi S. Vict. in Cantic. Canticor. c. 11.

† Xen. Oeconom. cap. 11.

known to posterity," says the historian of Croyland, "There was a man in the town of Croyland, named John Wayle, a day labourer. He committed some enormous crime which was known only to himself. When the holy season arrived in which the faithful people prepare to celebrate the Paschal feast by purifying themselves in the laver of pious confession, he went to the church along with the others through shame and not from a desire of confession. There admitted to the tribunal he concealed this deadly wound and went away uncleansed, and on the day of our Lord's resurrection, O grief! he dared to receive the sacrament of reconciliation to the destruction of his own soul. Returning home he felt remorse, which increased during three days, till at length he was seized with horrible madness, as if possessed by dæmons. So the neighbours bound him in irons. The monks hastened to his assistance, and proceeded to read the office to him, but every time that the words of hope and salvation were pronounced, he fell into convulsions and uttered cries of despair. At length he was carried bound into the church, and a watch was set over him. Every one poured out prayers for him, and there was always some one or other of the monks who spoke consoling words to him, and promised a remedy for his mind, but he would make no answer, only through incessant clamour he was become hoarse and unable to speak much. At length he was observed to grow more gentle, and to make the sign of the cross. Examples of penitence were read to him, and he was exhorted to confession by every argument. There was one of the brethren who peculiarly devoted himself to save his soul, consoling him with secret counsels and private exhortations, and declaring to him that there was no crime so horrible in life but that it might be washed away by contrition and confession. Moreover, to win him he told him that if he would consent, he would willingly give his own soul a pledge for his. With such words the man was moved, and lo, signing himself, he declared that he was ready to confess. Unbound he was then led to the confessional, where at first he could only pour forth groans, but at length after repeated attempts, that brother still urging him, and going to him alone, by divine grace the string of his tongue was loosed, and he made his confession. Such was his joy and gratitude, that for

seven days after he never left the church, but continued giving thanks to God. He changed his habitation to another place, but every succeeding year as long as he lived he used to visit Croyland, to give glory to God, and to thank blessed Mary and St. Guthlac *.”

St. Bernard, in a letter to the abbot Suger, called upon him by every motive of religion and duty, to exert his influence with the Senechal Stephen de Garlande, who was reputed to be his friend. “ Give him then,” says he, “ proofs of a solid friendship; labour for his conversion, and become by these means the friend of truth †.” The admonitory letter which Peter, the venerable abbot of Cluni, sent to the Lord Stephen de Castello, telling him that it was high time to think about saving his soul, is another noble example of this charitable solicitude for the increase of justice ‡. The blessed Manasses, bishop of Troyes, in the year 983, was not content with labouring for the sanctification of his flock and of his clergy to the neglect of his own family, who were powerful in the world. He had a brother Hilduin, count of Arcyes sur Aulbe, who led a military, carnal, voluptuous and desperate life, which greatly afflicted the bishop. Hearing that the abbot Adson had a certain ascendancy over his soul, for he feared and respected him, he deputed him to associate as much as possible with this debauched soldier. Adson, who was never slow to labour for souls, was enabled by the divine grace to convert him, so that the insolent soldier and vicious libertine became a thorough penitent and a true gentleman. What a miracle was this? that a choleric count, murderous and cruel, should be changed into a mild, humane, peaceable gentleman, who undertook a pilgrimage to Jerusalem to suffer for Jesus Christ §. This zeal for conversions to justice was not confined to the clergy. We find it inspiring even poets. Laurent Desmoulins says that he wrote his book entitled the *Catholicon des Mal Advisez*—

* Hist. Croylandensis Continuat. p. 539. in Rer. Anglic. Script. tom. I.

† S. Bernardi Epist. LXXVIII.

‡ S. Pet. Ven. Abb. Epist. Lib. V. 3.

§ Desguerrois Hist. du Diocèse de Troyes, 244.

“A celle fin que on advise à bien vivre
 Et amender sa vie désormais
 Sans offenser le Créateur jamais.”

“There are some,” says Guibert de Nogent, “who live well and continently, but who, because they have not a pastoral place in the church, think that they do not owe to their brethren a word of holy preaching, which is very absurd ; for if by a dumb animal, that is, by an ass, according to blessed Peter, God wished to reprove the folly of the prophet, how much more and beyond all comparison worthy of teaching and of giving discipline to co-equals is the human nature *.” It is in reference to these wondrous examples of conversion that the church makes use of that remarkable expression, “O God, the restorer and lover of innocence †.” For among the benefits of penance was reckoned the fulfilment of the divine promise that the years which the locust and caterpillar, and the rust had eaten, should be restored ; words interpreted by St. Jerome as implying the restitution of spiritual goods which had been consumed by mortal sin ; and St. Anselm says that “when the sins of one who has been absolved are made manifest to an assembled universe, they may give him no more pain than the remembrance of a wound on the body which had been long healed ‡.” But let us proceed now to the institution itself through which such grace is communicated to human souls.

As God the Father laid aside his right of judging, and gave to his Son all power to judge in sending him into the world, so the Son, on leaving the world, transmitted to his apostles and to their successors his sovereign authority to condemn or absolve the world §. “Consider, brethren,” says Hugo of St. Victor, “the merciful dispensation of God. He alone can take away sins and justify sinners, and yet, that he might give security to the human conscience, he hath granted the power of loosing sins, and the power of indulgence to man, in

* Guiberti Abb. de Novigento Moralium Geneseos Præmium.

† Fourth feria, 2d week in Lent.

‡ S. Anselmi de Similitud. cap. 60.

§ S. Joan. 20, 21.

order that man might approach with more familiarity and confidence to man as to his like, whom also he can behold when about to ask and receive pardon. For God can see man praying, but man could not see God indulging. Therefore God hath willed that man should speak to man and treat of his salvation with him, and should seek pardon and receive indulgence from him who is but the minister of Him to whom all authority is given in heaven and on earth *.”

“ Show me bitter tears,” says S. Gregory of Nyssa, “ that I may mingle mine with yours. Impart your trouble to the priest as to your Father ; he will be touched with a sense of your misery. Show to him what is concealed without blushing ; open the secrets of your soul as if you were showing to a physician a hidden disorder ; he will take care of your honour and of your cure †.” And Origen says, “ if we discover our sins not only to God but to those who may thus apply a remedy to our wounds and iniquities, our sins will be effaced by him who said, ‘ I have blotted out thy iniquities as a cloud, and thy sins as a mist ‡.’ ” How do such passages recall the marvellous secrets of Almighty providence, and of heaven’s mercy attested in the chronicles of the ages of faith, and known to so many at all times from the personal experience of a troubled life ! How do they recall that transference and constitution of kingdoms, when God having overthrown the tyranny of vices, makes virtues reign in the soul of man § ! “ They who fly from Sodom have the angel of God for guide,” says S. John Climachus, alluding to the flight from sin by the sacraments of the church ||. “ Mark those penitents who kneel down by confessionals at the feet of some meek venerable father who stoops down to hear the whispered lamentation, to beat away the busy meddling fiend that lays strong siege unto the wretch’s soul, and from his bosom purge the black despair. O through what waters must their souls have passed before the sense of what

* Hugo de S. Vict. Eruditionis Theolog. ex Miscellan. Lib. I. tit. 49.

† Serm. de Pœnit.

‡ Hom. 17. in Lucam.

§ Richard. de S. Victor, de eruditione hominis interioris, Lib. I. 1. 14.

|| Scala Paradisi.

is intolerable constrained them to take refuge here! A man came expressly one hundred leagues to confess to St. Francis de Sales at Paris, and another made a voyage of two thousand leagues by sea to confess to St. Francis Xavier. "Who will place me," such is their cry, "according to the month of my former days in which God kept me, when his light illumined my heart! Ah, where is that purity of prayer? that certain confidence? Where are those sweet tears in bitterness? Where are they? Where that hope of holy rest? They are perished, and as if they had never been!"

The voice of God walking in Paradise is interpreted by Guibert de Nogent as signifying the reproof or memory of past justice no longer preserved. The Lord calls Adam and saith, Adam, where art thou? He calls him when he wishes to lead him to penance after having committed sins—Where art thou! Mark the place to which thou hast fallen, which is no other than pride, thou who hadst formerly learned to stand humble*. "Quis mihi tribuat, ut sim juxta menses pristinos, secundum dies quibus Deus custodiebat me: quando splendebat lucerna ejus super caput meum, et ad lumen ejus ambulabam in tenebris; sicut fui in diebus adolescentiae meae, quando secreto Deus erat in tabernaculo meo; quando erat omnipotens mecum et in circuitu meo pueri mei; quando lavabam pedes meos butyro, et petra fundebat mihi rivos olei †?" He that once appeared as the angelic youth daily growing up in the favour of God and man, wanders now over the face of the earth, deposed, ejected, emptied, gazed, unpitied, shunned, a spectacle of ruin or of scorn to all the host of heaven! How shall I behold the face henceforth of God or angel, erst with joy and rapture so oft in purity of heart beheld? Such is the interior cry of erring man, when first the voice is heard which calls him from the truly dreadful grave of mortal sin. Ah, what foul winds have shaken sore his inward state of mind, calm region once, and full of peace, now lost and turbulent: for understanding hath not been suffered to rule, and the will hath not heard her lore; both have been in subjection to sensual appetite, who from beneath usurping over sovereign reason

* Moralium Geneseos, Lib. II. c. 3.

† Job xxix.

claimed superior sway. Child of grace, wafted towards better waves, the harbingers of untroubled and eternal peace, how did you feel your heart beat when you found yourself within the port of repentance, and how did hope revive when you beheld the senior at your side, holy and revered, with gestures such as spake a father's love ; who marked the secret wish by diffidence restrained, and speaking, gave you confidence to speak. He is the true father, who can give preceptial medicine to rage, fetter strong madness in a silken thread, and charm agony with words. "Do you wait to be worthy before you rise up and go to your Father?" It is an ascetic of the middle ages who speaks. "And when will that be ? If only the good and worthy, and great and perfect ought to approach God, to whom can the publicans and sinners go ? Yet the Gospel says, that they drew near to Jesus to hear him. Let the unworthy then approach in order that they may be made worthy, and let the evil come that they may be made good ; let the little and imperfect come that they may be rendered great and perfect ; let all and each come that they may receive from the plenitude of the living fountain, for he is the fountain of life which is inexhaustible *."

"Penitence," says St. John Climachus, "is the daughter of hope, the renouncement of infidelity and despair †." "Penitence," says Clemens Alexandrinus, "is tardy knowledge. The first knowledge is innocence. Βραδεῖα γὰρ γνῶσις μετάνοια, γνῶσις δὲ ἡ πρώτη ἀναμαρτυρίσια ‡." "Penitence," says the church, "is the last plank after shipwreck." Richard of St. Victor, attests the experience of the church, saying, "often the human mind after a multiplied ruin, being moved by divine inspiration, returns to justice, and being taught and humbled by its fall, rises again the more vigorous inasmuch as it is more instructed and more humbled §." While those that have greatly fallen find salvation here, the just who falls seven times each day gains strength and facility in his progress to perfection. Slight, indeed, may have been his fall ; still he relates it somewhat with that co-

* Thom. à Kempis, Soliloquium.

† Scala Paradisi, Grad. V.

‡ Stromat. Lib. II. c. 6.

§ De eruditione hominis interioris, Lib. I. cap. I.

lour tinged which oft times pardon for heavier injuries meriteth for man. The poet who had often heard the traditions of the ages of faith, says, "That our virtues would be proud if our faults whipped them not." In fact, how many virtues on the part of man, how many graces on the part of the divine Mediator, how many attributes of the Divinity would be unknown, if sin had not been, penance, repentance, contrition, satisfaction, sacraments, reconciliation! These were the operations which formed the Catholic character, which destroyed in the soul all hypocrisy and formal virtue, teaching every child of the church to cry with king Richard in the moments of his triumph, "Cover your heads, and mock not flesh and blood with solemn reverence!" The habit of confession humbled the interior man, and repressed insolence of exterior, sweetened conversation and enlarged the mind ; so that if it were possible to submit the temper of the adversaries of the holy discipline to such a process, we may be assured that it could not long resist its action. Independent even of the supernatural influence, the hearts of many were doubtless inflamed by those previous and subsequent prayers known to the faithful, which were pronounced over the initiated ; mystic expressions orally transmitted from the ancient church, beyond all doubt the most impressive and sublime that were ever heard issuing from mortal lips. Times, indeed, there were, when canonic skill imposed delay, when there were doubts which required the postponement of this act of supreme grace ; but then mark, reader, with what care the sinking wretch was prevented from falling back to the gulf of the reprobate. The penitent against whom the doors of reconciliation were for a season closed, went away inflamed rather than discouraged, already replete with consolation. His testimony might be that of Adam in reply to the angel who gave hope of mercy even when announcing his sentence of banishment from Paradise.

" Gently hast thou told
Thy message, which might else in telling wound,
And in performing end us ; what besides
Of sorrow and dejection and disgrace
Our frailty can sustain, doubt not
Shall be borne with grateful resignation,
In a spirit of contrition and atoning woe."

There is no important effect even of secular good which the guides of the middle ages do not ascribe to a sincere and humble faith in the sacrament of penance. Guibert de Nogent relates, that in his time there was a young woman on the borders of Cambrai who, after becoming the unhappy victim of a seducer, was speedily moved to true contrition, so that she made humble confession of her sin. That night being about to travel to another country, she was overtaken by the same traitor and induced to approach the side of a well into which he threw her; and after a time, finding by her reply that she was not dead, he made a shower of stones descend upon her, and then went away, believing that the crime was consummated. After forty days some swine-herds in the fields passing near that well, heard a hollow groan from beneath, which led to the discovery of her being at the bottom. Hastening to the town and returning with ropes, they succeeded, in the presence of a multitude, in drawing her up and restoring her to life. The fame of which miracle was spread to distant lands. "Lo," cries Guibert, "what avails perseverance in the resolution of amendment. She had faith in penitence, and after the grace of confession never doubted God's mercy and the efficacy of his sacrament. She had that faith which in all the ancient patriarchs is commemorated with such repetition by the apostle *." But I should never finish were I to repeat the remarkable events, and the beautiful profound reflections contained in the books of the middle ages respecting the virtue and excellence of that sacerdotal absolution which, as Richard of St. Victor says, "frees a true penitent studious of satisfying for his sin, not only from the dreadful flames of eternal punishment, but also from the burning fire of purgatory †." Never, therefore, in days of yore did envious pride find utterance, when men overheard a brother addressing the priest of holy church in words like those of Spenser :

" What service may I doe unto thee meete
 Thou hast from darkness me return'd to light,
 And with thy heavenly salves and med'cines sweete
 Hast drest my sinful wounds ? I kisse thy blessed feete ‡."

* Guibert de Novigento de Pign. Sanctorum, Lib. II. cap. 2.

† De potestate ligandi et solvendi, c. 23.

‡ Spenser, III. 5.

If these things were not conformable to the ideal in the minds of certain philosophers of a perfect and immutable state, it was well remembered that they were avowedly intended for a condition of existence that was recognized as imperfect and mutable. Man alone, a wayfarer, that is, while on earth, was known to be the subject of the sacraments which are the instruments by which all true justice either begins, or is increased when begun, or is restored when lost *. As St. Augustin says, “the temporal sacraments are the medicinal ligatures of our contrition. All the things whatsoever that we say to you, whatever is acted temporally in the church, are ligatures of the contrite. In the state of Jerusalem they will be removed as the surgeon unbinds the patient who is restored to health. There we shall not receive what we receive here. The Gospel will not be recited that our faith may remain, and no hands of a superior will be imposed upon us. All these things are ligatures of a fracture which will be taken off when we come to perfect soundness †.”

Hitherto we have avoided controversy. As the swimmer first creeps along the high bank of the ancient Campus Martius, caressing each flower as he passes, before he commits himself to the impetuous and turbid flood of the Tiber, which he knows will carry him away so far when once he commits himself to it,—so have I lingered on these confines, loth to plunge into a frigid and obscure debate amidst ruins and a wreck of opinions which present nothing tangible or defined, or trustworthy. The Athenian ambassadors said in the assembly of Lacedæmon, that “with all men it was a blameless thing, and the object of no envious displeasure, to establish well the measure most useful against the greatest dangers ‡.” But the adversaries of the church have formed an exception when they have condemned the salutary and divine institution of the sacramental confession, one of the subjects which they deem eminently calculated to further their efforts to alienate the minds of the ignorant from that state in which alone they can be happy; thus continuing to verify the saying of wise men in ancient

* De la Hogue de Sacramentis in Genere, cap. 6.

† Tract. in Ps. 146.

‡ Thucydid. I. 75.

times, that “while the cure of the body is regarded as worthy of immortal honours, the medicine of the soul is by many persons disdained, and by more viewed with suspicion and envy *.” In general one may note in the *μισοκαθολικοί*, as in all that kind of people who seek a praise by dispraising others, that they do prodigally spend a great many wandering words in scoffs and taunts, carping at each thing which by stirring the spleen, may stay the brain from a thorough beholding the worthiness of the subject. These kind of objections, as they are full of a very idle easiness, (since there is nothing of so sacred a majesty, but that an itching tongue may rub itself upon it), so, as an ancient writer says, deserve they no other answer, but instead of laughing at the jest, to laugh at the jester. Indeed, these pleasant fault-finders, who will correct the verb before they understand the noun, and confute others’ knowledge before they confirm their own, should be reminded at least, that scoffing cometh not of wisdom. Here one may remark in passing, how vain must have been the attempt of those who were separated from the church to understand what passed within it, always arguing a posse ad esse. Even in common life strangers can never tell what passes within a house until they have been admitted regularly as members of the family. The wayfarer, if disposed to judge, needs an admonition like that of the hermit in Tasso, who knowing that the crusaders were misled by a false report respecting Bertoldo’s heir—

“ Sir knight, (quoth he) if you intend to ride
 And follow each report fond people say,
 You follow but a rash and trothless guide,
 That leads vain men amiss, and makes them stray †.”

Now the church had far more mysterious relations than could exist in any mere domestic society, so that by persons who viewed it from without, a right understanding respecting it could only be formed by an act in the first instance, of confidence in the truth of God who has founded the church. They must at first have been satisfied with the evidence that it was a divinely constituted household, and then after being received into it as mem-

* Cicero, Tusc. III.

† Jerus. Deliv. Lib. XIV. 30.

bers, they would assuredly in due time have discovered how it was holy in all its doctrines, and just in all its ways. As the Athenian says to the blind wanderer who interrogates him respecting the laurel groves to which he has come—"These things, O stranger, are to be venerated, not from the words of men, but rather from long custom and experience*." Cicero, indeed, says, that "the medicine of the soul is not only not desired before discovered, but that it is not even valued after it is known; but such a complaint applies only to philosophy, for it was ungrounded in relation to the remedies which the church administers, insomuch that a man accustomed to confession, when asked for arguments to prove its divine origin as an integral part of religion, must have felt as if he had been called upon to prove the reality of his own existence. Its proofs were in the deepest roots of his spiritual life. His own amendment, the recovery of long lost joy, the renovation of his heart, this was the evidence that must have convinced him so feelingly that each argument beside would seem blunt and forceless in comparison. It is dangerous to follow men into the deepest recesses of their heart and behold what passes there: I will not, therefore, invite the moderns to search into the grounds of their hatred for confession. To persons obstinate in the conclusions of prejudice, reader, would I turn not, when viewing historically the supernatural features in the morality of the Catholic church. On confession and indulgence I will speak not as if to an ignorant multitude, nor to judges, nor to senators, more accustomed to action than to the contemplation of things, but as to a man interiorly philosophic who understands and loves philosophy.

Respecting the hatred of truth and the love of deceiving and of being deceived observable in many men, Paschal says, "Mark a proof of this which fills me with horror. The Catholic religion does not oblige one to discover his sins indifferently to all the world; it permits him to remain concealed from all other men excepting one only, to whom it commands him to disclose the bottom of his heart, and to show himself such as he really is. There is only this one man in the world that it orders us to undeceive, and he is obliged to an inviolable secrecy,

* *Œdip. Col. 62.*

so that this knowledge is in him as if it was not in him. Can one imagine any thing more charitable and more gentle? Nevertheless, the corruption of man is such that he finds this a hard law, and it is one of the principal reasons which have made a great part of Europe revolt against the church *." You have heard the great thinker of modern times; let us now attend to the philosophy of the middle ages. "Silence respecting sin," says the Master of the Sentences, "arises from pride of heart. For a man wishes not to confess his sin in order that he may not be reputed externally such as he exhibits himself in the sight of God, which desire springs from the fountain of pride. For it is pride in a sinner to wish to be esteemed just, and it is hypocrisy to palliate or deny our sin like our first parents, or like Cain to bury it in silence. Now where there is pride and hypocrisy there can be no humility, and without humility there is no forgiveness. Therefore, where there is silence respecting sin there can be no hope of pardon. Here then," he continues, "we see how detestable is the silence of sin, and how necessary is confession, which is the evidence of a conscience fearing God; for he who fears the judgment of God does not blush to confess. Perfect fear dissolves all shame. The confession of sin has shame, and that shame is a heavy punishment: and for this reason we are commanded to confess, that we may suffer shame, for this is part of the divine judgment †." Thus the words of St. John, beginning with "if we confess our sins †," were not understood as implying merely, "If we say that we are sinners generally with all the world," but as teaching the necessity of suffering the shame and humiliation of confessing one's personal particular sins; nor was there found any one formerly to maintain that this could be an immoral shame which would injure rather than repair the soul's purity. That extreme horror on finding that one has been suspected of crime, which Tieck's hero evinces in his conversation with Balthasar, only proved in fact an unilluminated heart: moreover, this overstrained and false honour reveals its own weakness, for by its very indignation it evinces its conviction that the fall was possible. It is

* Pensees, I. Partie, Art. V.

† Lib. IV. Distinct. 18, 19.

† 1 Joan. I. 9.

worthy of remark, that while the church inflicted penance on all who ever made mention of expiated sins,—for among the penitential canons of the rule of St. Columban, we read, “ He who relates a sin already expiated shall fast on bread and water for a day *,”—the very men who denounced the act of humility that she imposed as injurious, made no scruple not only as we before observed, in resting in self-contemplation, but also in confessing the sins of their past life; or rather exulted in being able to recall the remembrance of them, disclosing them in detail with effrontery: their own retrospective narration differing from the confession which they renounced and stigmatised, only in the circumstance that their’s was made in defiance of the law of God, in hardened impenitence insensible to shame.

“ O fearful thought!” cries S. John Climachus, “ there are moments of delirium in the career of sin, when man fears not God, esteems as nothing the memory of eternal punishment, execrates prayer, looks at the relics of the dead as if they were senseless stones †.” True, indeed; but what is it to reflect that in consequence of a new instruction, widely imparted and legally established in some places, this is the case with men now, not during moments of delirium, for which they might repent and make amends, but throughout their whole lives, which pass in an uninterrupted career of self-esteem and congratulation? To the fundamental objection of the moderns, the best mode of reply would be simply to relate in the clear and precise language of the middle ages, what was the Catholic doctrine. Taking, then, Hugo of St. Victor for their representative, let us hear what he says respecting sacerdotal absolution. “ Solus Deus peccata dimittit; yet authorities have that power by which priests forgive sins, and that by which God forgives them. But priests are said to forgive sins, because they administer the sacraments in which, and by which, sins are by the divine authority, forgiven ‡.” When it was said that the form of absolution which had been in use thirty years before was deprecatory, and that William of Auxerre, William of Paris, and cardinal Hugo thought that this was the only ancient form, S. Tho-

* Bibliothe. M. Patrum, Tom. XII. 2.

† Grad. XV.

‡ Hugo de S. Vict. de Ecclesiasticis Officiis, Lib. I. cap. 25.

mas Aquinas replied, that “ he did not know whether this were true or not; but in any case no authority of antiquity could do prejudice to the words of our Lord, ‘ Whatever you shall bind on earth.’ ” Thus instead of being tempted to enter with them upon subtle, antiquarian investigations, he embraced the spirit of antiquity. It is clear, however, from the Roman council under pope Zacharia, that the form of the sacrament of confession was then similar to what it is at present*. Strictly judicial is the sacerdotal office, so that with accurate precision has the church retained the name of Basilica, which signified that upper part of the forum, where justice was administered to the people†.

The world, which instigates men to acts of injustice, is apt to suggest afterwards that the assurance of divine forgiveness is ungrounded and prejudicial. The modern philosopher holds language in regard to him who has been loosed by sacerdotal absolution, which might remind one of the fearful strife which Buonconte describes to Dante.

“ Me God’s angel took,
Whilst he of hell exclaim’d : ‘ O thou from heav’n!
Say, wherefore hast thou robb’d me? Thou of him
Th’ eternal portion bear’st with thee away
For one poor tear ‡.’ ”

But the wisdom of the ages of faith does not yield to such a cry as this. And in fact, there was no error which struck more at the root of Catholic manners, than the despair which led to it. Every man who hath rebellious proved to the law of heaven’s justice, might say, like Exton, after murdering Richard the Second,

“ For now the devil that told me I did well,
Says, that this deed is chronicled in hell.”

Such accusation is heard in the hearts of all who are conscious of guilt, without knowing how to escape from it. In this mental torment steeped, there is what Novalis remarks, in the greatest physical pain, a paralysis of susceptibility, than which no disposition is more easily embraced. Man then stands as a destructive power.

* Mabil. Præfat. in III. Sæcul. Benedict. §. 6.

† M. Ant. Surgentis Neapolis illustrata, c. VI.

‡ Purg. V.

Alone, unconnected with the rest of the world, he feels himself almighty, and has for principle the hatred of men and of God*. Weary at length of sitting like the sullen Achilles, ἔτωσιον ἄχθος ἀρούρης †, a state equally obnoxious both to nature and grace,—bent on destruction, and yet undetermined what object to select, stung with sudden wrath, he turns his fury inward on himself, and joins the wretched band, whom, now more than ever numerous are found; for without descending to the regions of the dead, we can daily behold what Dante witnesseth, that

“ The damned to o'erpass the river are not loth;
For so heaven's justice goads them on, that fear
Is turn'd into desire ‡.”

Thus he makes that dismal choice to which the heathens devoted their enemies, as in the Virgilian line,

“ Di meliora piis, erroremque hostibus illum §.”

How many men in our age resemble that eternal wanderer whose sorrows have been described in the legendary songs of every people, and whom a modern author has found so apt a subject for the wild poesy in which his genius takes delight. Ah, could the internal language of conscience, maintaining a continued conversation with these wretched victims, be heard by others, how often would be repeated the fearful dialogue between Ahasuerus and the fabled angel. “ I feel a poison on my lips which I drink at every breath. Will it be as bitter to-morrow? More bitter to-morrow than yesterday, in the evening than the morning; more bitter at the bottom of thy flask than at the brim; more bitter in thy lodging than on thy journey, on thy journey than on thy departure; more bitter in the star than in the tempest; more bitter than in the star and the tempest, on the lips and in the eyes of thy host. Where goest thou? To my house. Thy gate is shut, thou shalt never pass it more. I have not yet taken my sandals, nor my belt, nor my cloak. Thou hast no need of them. Thou shalt have for coat of mail thy tissue of sorrows, and for cloak, the wind, the snow, and the rain of an eternal cloud. I know not the road. Thou shalt follow the track of the cranes across

* Schriften. II. 299.

† Hell, III.

‡ Il. XVIII. 104.

§ Georgic. III. 513.

the sky ; thou shalt walk on thorns. The gates of the city shall say to thee farther ; and the river, by the banks of which thou wouldest sit down, shall say farther, farther, to the sea, and the sea shall say to thee, farther, farther. Art thou not the eternal wanderer who shall have neither sleep nor rest, who shall never see the temple of his vow till the dead shall show thee the way to the last judgment in the valley of Josaphat ? ” These writers fable not. This echo, this voice of the mountain, this tradition of the sentence of Golgotha, depart, depart, farther on, farther on, pursues every soul of man that doeth evil ; vainly does the sinner seek to shake from his head this black crown of cares. He turns to every man but to him by whom he could be delivered, and asks,

“ Canst thou not minister to a mind diseased ;
Pluck from the memory a rooted sorrow ;
Rase out the written troubles of the brain ;
And, with some sweet oblivious antidote,
Cleanse the stuffed bosom of that perilous stuff
Which weighs upon the heart ? ”

He can describe the evil well, though he disdains to apply to Him who could remove it ; disdains, I say, for remark here that it was not with the medicinal lore of the church, as with the remedies of subtle investigators of nature, the secret of which was limited to a few. For the soul’s health, the most obscure and ignorant knew or might have known where to apply in time of need, as the chamois-hunter in Manfred, where he says to that dark wanderer,

“ Man of strange words, and some half-maddening sin,
Which makes thee people vacancy, whate’er
Thy dread and sufferance be, there’s comfort yet—
The aid of holy men—* ”

Do you ask where are they found ? Enter any of our churches, and there you will find them, like their divine Master on the mountain, seated waiting for you. Truly the view of a confessional, which excites the derision of the modern sophists, is enough to bring before the mind’s eye of the faithful, Christ and the beatitude of heaven. He taught them seated on the mountain, to show, as St.

* Manfred, Act II.

Bernardine of Sienna remarks, “the sublimity and peace of the divine wisdom. He sat as if waiting for men; waiting for them in their sickness and infirmities, for men are slow to believe the things that are Christ’s, slow to understand what is useful, slow to perform what is necessary, slow to penitence when they leave the right way and pour out their souls in sin; but the benignity of God, the patience of God, the charity of Christ waits for their repentance, seeking not vengeance but to show mercy. His ministers sit, therefore, to attract the hearers. Why can I not hear them speak standing? Methinks I hear you say, I do not like this attraction; I disdain this authority. True, when there is a discourse in your assemblies to secular men, the orator generally stands, as if inviting to battle. But here, when men are supposed to be religious and contemplative, or desirous of becoming so, the high commissioned teacher remains seated, as if inviting men to tranquillity and peace*.”

Would you learn now how this remedy is administered to the contrite? Listen then to the confessor, who speaks to the penitent in the words of St. Augustin. “Perchance you will say I have been baptized in Christ, when all my past sins were forgiven. I am now become too vile, resuming my former ways, and in the eyes of God returning like a loathsome dog to his vomit. Whither shall I go from his spirit? Whither shall I fly from his face? Whither, brother, unless by penitence to the mercy of Him whose power thou didst scorn by sinning? For from him no one rightly flies, but to him, from his severity to his goodness—for whatever you may have done, whatever may have been your sin, you are still in life, from which God, if he had been altogether unwilling to save you, would have taken you off. Why, therefore, do you not know that the patience of God leadeth you to repentance? For he who by crying out did not prevail upon you not to withdraw from him, by sparing you, cries out persuading you to return†.” “As there is no tree so thorny and gnarled that it cannot be made smooth by the skill of the artisan, so there is no sinner,” said holy Giles the Franciscan, “so flagitious, that God cannot change his heart, and adorn him with the virtues of his grace.”

* S. Bernardini Senensis, Tom. III. Ser. IV.

† Serm. CCCLI.

According to St. Augustin, the sin against the Holy Ghost is that of him who despairing, mocking, or despising the preaching of grace by which sins are washed away, and of peace by which we are reconciled to God, refuses to do penance, resolves to remain hardened in their impious and deadly sweetness, and so perseveres to the end*. So, when certain unworthy monks of St. Denis turned upon Abaillard, who charitably endeavoured to convert them to a holier life, and reminded him of his own sin and the scandal he had occasioned, he closed their mouths by those beautiful words of St. Gregory, "Peccare humanum est, permanere autem in peccatis diabolicum†."

By confession and absolution, say the moderns, it is easy for the greatest criminals to tranquillize their conscience, and conceive themselves good Catholics. True, if their penitence be sincere. But what then? Is the church a school of philosophers, boasting of impeccable justice? So far otherwise, that St. Augustin compares it to an asylum opened for the refuse of every state. "Remission of sins," saith he, "which collects citizens to the eternal country, has something to which by a shadow there was a certain similitude in that asylum of Romulus, in which impunity of every crime drew together that multitude by which the state was founded‡." You mark what was his idea of the city of God on earth. "The sacraments of the Catholic church were not for the just, but for sinners hungering and thirsting after justice. This was the grace which healed the infirm, not proudly boasting of a false beatitude, but rather humbly confessing a true misery§." The world's zeal for virtue and the church's love for justice, are personified and drawn to the life by Shakspeare in two lines, where, to the indignant and scornful question of Leonato to poor Hero,

"Dost thou look up?"

The Friar answers,

"Yea: wherefore should she not||?"

* S. August. in Epist. I. ad Rom.

† Moral. in Job.

‡ De Civitate Dei, Lib. V. 17. § Id. X. 28.

|| Much Ado about Nothing, IV. 1.

The whole spirit of the Catholic religion is in this reply, “Wherefore should she not?” “Major est divina misericordia quam humana miseria*.”

How soon appeared God’s mercy upon Adam and Eve, even in the first judgment, reversing instant death, and clothing them naked! “Further,” says Louis of Blois, “read the whole life of Christ. What else do you behold but constant mercy for all men? Gratuitously he cures the sick, feeds the hungry, assists those who are in danger, cleanses the lepers, gives sight to the blind and strength to the lame, casts out devils, raises the dead, and absolves the penitent. Examine again his doctrine, and what else does it breathe but the immense mercy of God? For what else appears in the parable of the lost sheep, of the lost piece of money, of the sound to whom there is no need of a physician, of the servant whose whole debt is forgiven, of the lender who excuses both his debtors, of the publican and the pharisee, of the good Samaritan, of the kind steward, of the prodigal son? Does not the very word Gospel promise mercy? Does not the very name Jesus promise salvation to sinners†? “Who could have thought,” says Pelisson, “that the sinful woman would have obtained by her love and tenderness, the reward of virgins? That the robber punished for his crimes, should have found in his punishment the privilege of martyrs‡? If the ten lepers, who were desired to go and show themselves to the priests, were healed as they went, how much more have the spiritually-defiled reason to expect that they will be cleansed by complying with the institution of Christ, in revealing their interior maladies to those ministers of his mercy who have especial authority from him to obliterate or to make indelible?”

St. Augustin, speaking of the Scribes and Pharisees who brought to our Lord the woman taken in adultery, desires us to observe what was the admirable mildness of our Lord. They considered that he was too merciful, too gentle§. On the same day the church reads this Gospel and the history of Susanna accused by the elders and condemned to death. Here is the contrast of human judgment and that of Christ. The one pronounced death,

* Petr. Bles. † Ludovic. Blosii Consolatio pusillan. I.

‡ Réponse aux objections, sect. V.

§ Tractat. in 33. Joan.

the other these gracious words, "Neither do I condemn thee; go, and sin no more." We condemn these Scribes and Pharisees, and yet they only fulfilled what the law imposed on them. They ought to have been the first to throw the first stone, and the people were to finish afterwards what they had begun. Behold what should confound those who accuse the church for receiving sinners? St. Augustin says that the Jews who had crucified our Lord afterwards fell into despair, but that they ought not to have despaired since Jesus had prayed for them on the cross, and had pleaded in excuse their ignorance*. St. Bonaventura undoubtedly speaks the universal sentiment of men in the middle ages on this point, "for," saith he, "the mercy of our God is immense, and if there were in you alone all the sins that ever were committed, or could be committed by other men, his mercy would still exceed them infinitely, and he would pardon you all these things, if you returned to him trusting in the wounds of Christ, and in the clemency of his Mother, considering yourself a sinner, and humbly turning your mind to the fountain of pity†." "Millies excideras, toties vult spes uti resurgas," was the maxim of the monks of St. Gall in the tenth century. "Nullum peccatum criminale dum displicet," saith St. Augustin, "nullum veniale dum placet." As Durandus observes, the church in her offices reads from the writings of David, who was a homicide and an adulterer, from those of Matthew, who was a publican, from those of Paul, who was a cruel persecutor of Christ, and from those of St. Augustin, who was a Manichæan, holding forth a wondrous standard to rally the dispersed and to remove despair from sinners‡. "Let no one distrust," says St. Ambrose; "let no one conscious of ancient sins despair of divine rewards. The Lord knows how to change his sentence, if you know how to amend your faults§." In a word, say the doctors of the middle ages, "His mercy is as incomprehensible as his justice."

As in this world, the abuse of all good gifts follows as naturally as shadows do on light, it can little surprise us to find that the sacrament of penance should be some-

* Tractat. 31 in Joan.

† Stimul. divin. amoris, Pars II. cap. 4.

‡ Durandi Rationale, Lib. VI. c. 1.

§ Lib. II. in Luc. c. 1.

times perverted from its true intention and spirit, by weak and deluded men.

"There are some," says St. Ambrose, "who ask for penance that they may be at once restored to communion. These do not so much desire to be loosed as to bind the priest, for they do not unburden their own consciences, but they burden his*."

True, there is a horrible perversity which may possibly develope itself in the practice of repeated confession, to which a most affecting allusion is made by Guibert de Nogent, in the history of his own life, whose words, however, are sufficient to convince every thoughtful reader that it is a stain from which humanity in general is exempt. Let us hear this innocent holy abbot testifying against himself. "I confess, O God, the cause of my infinite errors; I confess the sins of my boyhood, youth, and mature age. Often do I call to mind how I have repeatedly sinned against thee, and how, after each fall, thou didst grant me compunction, and how thou didst bear with me, with a patience beyond all that I can imagine, and such as I can never sufficiently admire. Has this now been an insolent piety, to go on thus sinning, and between sinning returning to thee? Thou knowest that I did not therefore sin because I felt thee to be merciful. I did not abuse thy mercy, when through the necessity of sinning I was compelled to sin. Truly, such an abuse would be too profane, if, because after sin, the return to thee was very easy, the excess of sinning should always have delighted me. I sin truly, but having received reason, it grieves me in the affection of my heart to have transgressed, whenever my mind has succumbed to the heavy temptation. Doubtless here is sufficient to fill me with humiliation and sorrow; but amidst these daily maladies, and as it were resurrections, what ought I to do? Whether is it not much more sane to struggle to approach thee for a time, or for a moment to take breath in thee, than to forget the remedy and to despair of grace; for what is to despair, unless to cast one's-self with deliberation into every sink of flagitiousness†."

Thus the men of the eleventh century had felt and considered, and rejected as groundless, the objection

* De Pœnitent. Lib. II. c. 9.

† Guiberti Abb. de Novigento de Vita sua, Lib. I. cap. 1.

which is now brought with such clamour against the faith and discipline of the church.

We are told also by some, that the penance of the Catholic church renders men satisfied with a mere formal profession, without a sincere return to God. But in this deep suspicion, reader, rest thou not. It is impossible for any one in the least imbued with the learning of the middle ages, to doubt whether the doctrine of the church on this point be obnoxious to such a charge. “True contrition,” say theologians, “is one of the acts of the penitent, which are, as it were, the matter of this sacrament *.” A repentance to which the three parts did not belong, was not permitted to tranquillize any conscience.” “Penance,” says St. Gregory, is “to weep for perpetrated evils, and not to commit again what we weep for.” Isidore says, “He is a mock penitent who continues to commit that for which he hath done penance †.” Pope Pius the First, in his epistle to all the faithful, says, “Nihil prodest homini jejunare et orare et alia religionis opera agere, nisi mens ab iniquitate revocetur.” And the Master of the Sentences, treating on the sacrament of penance, remarks that our Lord said, “Vade, et amplius noli peccare,” and did not say “Ne pecces,” but harbour not even the wish to sin ‡. “The only remedy for sin,” says St. Odo, the second abbot of Cluni, “is to refrain from committing it in future §.”

“True penance,” says Richard of St. Victor, “is to grieve for the past prevarication, with a firm purpose of confessing, of satisfying, and of avoiding sin in future. With this disposition penitents are worthily absolved by the priest; otherwise, they are sent away without absolution, that is, their sins are retained ||.” Hugo St. Victor expresses it thus: “The resurrection of Lazarus designates the effective absolution of the priest; for it was not until our Lord had called him, and had restored him to life, saying, ‘Lazarus, come forth!’ and until he had come forth, that he was loosed by the disciples: from which consideration we may remark, that those only we

* Conc. Trident. Sess. 14. cap. 3.

† In Lib. II. de summ. bono, cap. 16.

‡ Sentent. Lib. IV. Distinct. 14.

§ Bibliothec. Cluniacens. 318.

|| Richardi S. Vict. De potestate ligandi et solvendi, c. 6.

should loose by pastoral authority whom we understand our Author hath restored to life by resuscitating grace*.” “True confession and true penance,” saith he, in another place, “imply that a man so repents his having sinned, that he does not repeat the crime†.” The monks of St. Gall, in the tenth century, conveyed the same lesson in verse,

“Optime plorantur, quæ postea non geminantur ‡.”

All this is expressed in a terrific image by the great poet of the ages of faith, when Count Guido da Montefeltro, whom he meets in hell, though he is rash and unjust in placing him there, describes his being seized by the dark cherub, when he was numbered with the dead, who cried to Him that would have rescued him, “Wrong me not; he is mine, and must below to join the wretched crew.”

“No power can the impenitent absolve;
Nor to repent, and will, at once consist,
By contradiction absolute forbid.
Oh, misery! how I shook myself, when he
Seiz'd me, and cried, ‘Thou haply thought'st me not
A disputant in logic so exact §.’”

A glance at the Manipulus Curatorum of Guido de Monte Rocherius of Rheims in the thirteenth century, or one page of the books of Robert de Sorbon, entitled De Conscientia and De Confessione, would be sufficient to deter any one of ordinary courage from accusing the penitents and directors of those times of being deficient in spirituality ||. Truly, the language of the ancient writers is more calculated to make men tremble for themselves, than to excite a spirit of criticism in regard to others.

If thou hast, reader, lent hitherto a willing ear to those who vilify and mock our holy faith, for holding fast the promise of our Lord, I will render thee more apt to cope with them, and let this evidence

* Hugo S. Vict. De Ecclesiast. Officiis, Lib. I. cap. 26.

† De anima, Lib. III. c. 31.

‡ Ildefons. von Arx Geschichte des St. Gallen, I. 267.

§ Hell. XXVII.

|| Bibliothe. Patrum de la Bigne, IV.

" Henceforth be lead unto thy feet, to make
 Thee slow in motion as a weary man,
 Both to the 'yea' and 'nay' thou seest not*."

St. Ambrose says it is far easier to preserve our innocence, than truly to repent†. Yes, this was in primitive times, you say, but what thought the dark ages? Hear, then, Richard of St. Victor, who will dispel such doubts. "If," saith he, "you wish to know and can hear it patiently, a pagan is more easily reconciled after a hundred crimes than a Christian after only one. For whatever is committed by an infidel is counted a sin of ignorance, since, even if he had known that he was sinning when he sinned, yet he knew not how to examine the weight of sin; he knew not that it could only be expiated by the death of the man-God. Therefore the darkness of this ignorance immeasurably mitigates the enormity of sin; but Christians, who know that they are redeemed from death by the death of Christ, cannot be excused by ignorance‡." Iona, in his Laical Institutes, speaks to the same effect, and says "that those are more severely punished who received the faith of Christ and finished life in sin, than those who died without faith and yet performed good deeds;" which opinion he confirms from St. Peter § and St. Luke||.

The master of the sentences shows that no one can be a true penitent for one sin only, unless he is so equally for all. "Nunquam aliquem sanavit Dominus quem non omnino liberavit—quem ergo pœnitent omnino pœnitent—pœnitentes, si vero estis pœnitentes, et non estis irridentes, mutate viam, reconciliamini Deo¶."

That sins were known to be forgiven in the sacrament of penance is true, but it was also well known that there might be the temporal penalty still to pay. Every one in the middle ages had heard of what the abbot Sabbatius used to relate, because it was inserted in the work of Sophronius, that while he was living in the monastery of Firminus, a robber came requesting to be admitted as a

* Dante Parad. XIII. † Liv. de pœn. cap. 10.

‡ Richard. S. Vict. De potestate ligandi et solvendi, cap. 22.

§ II. 2. 21.

|| XII. 47, 48. Ionæ Aurelianens. Episcop. de Institut. Laïcali, Lib. 1. c. 19.

¶ Sentent. Lib. IV. Distinct. 15.

convertite, who, after nine years of probation, requested the abbot to give him back his secular habit, saying, that he believed his sins were forgiven him; that he had fasted, prayed, and lived a holy life, but that he always saw a boy standing near, and saying, "Why did you slay me?" That he saw him in the church, when he went to communion, in the refectory, in his dreams, and that he never left him. "Therefore," says he, "I am resolved to offer myself to death for that boy, for I murdered him." So he went to Diospolis, and on the next day was beheaded*.

Innumerable things, indeed, connected with the discipline of penance in the middle ages, were calculated to excite salutary fear. In the penitentiaries of the east and west, it was ordained that the penance imposed upon masters should be double of those imposed for the same sins on servants†. "Observe," says Richard of St. Victor, "how in the description of the grief of the lovers of Babylon, kings are placed first, because in proportion as the evil were more powerful in the world, so will they be the more miserable in hell." "Potentes potenter tormenta patientur‡." "No one moreover," as the Master of the Sentences observed, "could worthily do penance whom the unity of the church did not sustain; for," saith he, "it is not to be believed that he can recognize his sins to conversion of life, if he cannot have part in the communion of saints§." "No one," he continues, "is truly penitent for sin, having a contrite and humble heart, unless he is in charity; and hence it follows that a conversion in death is difficult, for he who repents late must not only fear judgment but also love; since without charity no one can be saved||." Belacqua's fate, revealed to Dante, gave salutary warning to those that would to the end delay repentant sighs¶. Alcimus Avitus, archbishop of Vienne, explains in verse the uncertainty and danger of late penance.

"Pœnitet ambiguè quem serò pœnitet: ergo
Præsentis spatium nobis dum creditur ævi,

* Pratum Spirituale, cap. 166.

† Charden, Hist. des Sacramens, Tom. II. c. 5.

‡ Super Apocalypsim, Lib. VI. c. 1.

§ Id. IV. 17. || Id. IV. 18, 19.

¶ Purg. IV.

Dum patulam cunctis Christi clementia sese
 Præbet, præteritæ plangamus criminæ vitæ,
 Pœnitentia olim negligenter temporis acti,
 Dum licet, et sano ingenioque, animoque valemus.
 Nam qui peccatum moriens dimittit, et ipsa
 In serum tempus differt admissa fateri,
 Non tam dimittit, quam dimittatur ab illis."

The objection against the Catholic doctrine of penance founded on the repentance of great sinners at their death, has been refuted in a masterly manner by Manzoni *. "The man who suffers shipwreck," he remarks, "calculates ill, who from believing in the possibility of reaching land, defers leaving the wreck, for the longer he delays the greater will be the difficulty;" and such was the argument of the church to those who were inclined to delay their conversion. In fact, the clergy constantly appealed to experience which verified her predictions. "These inveterate sinners," exclaims Bourdaloue, "die as they lived. They have lived in sin, and they die in sin; they have lived in the hatred of God, and they die in the hatred of God; they have lived as pagans, and they die as the reprobate. This is what experience teaches us. To believe that habits contracted during a whole life are destroyed at the approach of death, and that in a moment, can be gained a different mind, a different heart, a different will, is the grossest of all errors. At death above all times, it is most difficult to obtain true contrition. The time for seeking the God of mercy is life, the time for finding him is death." Hear again Massillon, "You have lived dissolute, you will die such; you have lived ambitious, you will die without the love of the world and of its vain honours having died in your heart; you have lived indolently without vice or virtue, you will die cowardly and without compunction. What does Jesus Christ declare will be the fruit of these deferred tears? 'Quæritis me, et in peccato vestro moriermini.'" "But why then," asks Manzoni, "does the church hasten to assist the dying sinner?" "Observe," he replies, in answer to this question, "that the church seems to have two languages for this matter, the one calculated to inspire terror in the strong intrepid sinner who promises himself a future time for repentance, and

* Osservazione sulla Morale Catholica, cap. 10.

the other to yield confidence to the dying." In this there is no contradiction, but prudence and truth. Men in both these states are disposed only to regard one side of the question ; and the church presents to them precisely that which they forget *. It is true both in life and death, the clergy, as St. Antoninus of Florence prescribed, were more prompt to loose than to bind. They marked the benignity of our adorable Lord, which had little need of entreating. His mother said no more but "Vinum non habent," and presently the water becomes wine ; the leprous man had no sooner said, Lord, if thou wilt thou canst make me clean, than he heard, "Volo, mundare :" the centurion could hardly say, Lord, my boy lieth at home sick of the palsy, when he was interrupted with, "Ego veniam et curabo eum." St. Martha and Magdalen sent to him saying, "Domine, quem amas infirmatur," and he presently came with them. This was the model which guided their conduct, but as St. Chrysostom said, surely it was better to have to answer for being too merciful than for being too severe. St. Odilo, abbot of Cluni, in imposing penance, evinced rather a maternal tenderness than the command of a father, and when some reprehended his lenity, he used to reply, "Although I may be condemned, yet I would rather be condemned for mercy than for severity †." We read of St. Gerard, bishop of Toul, that it was always his custom before retiring to sleep among other prayers, to make mention by name of all those whom he had been obliged to excommunicate, and them he absolved with merciful piety, lest sudden death should be visited upon any of them ; but this he did secretly, lest he should lead them to insolent presumption ; and he prayed the Almighty that he would put it into their hearts to feel the desire of reconciliation ‡. In other cases at least it was believed that there were exceptions in the unsearchable ways of Providence, when one might say without self-delusion, like the knight of old,

" Between the stirrup and the ground
I mercy asked, I mercy found."

* Osservazioni sulla Morale Catholica, p. 477.

† Bibliothec. Cluniacens. 318.

‡ Acta Tullensium Episcop. apud Martene Thesaur. Anecd. tom. III.

Such were, no doubt, the belief and practice of the clergy in the middle ages.

“The wisest and best men
With goodness principled not to reject
The penitent, but ever to forgive.”

In the synodial statutes of Verdun in the year 1508, it is said that if a robber on his way to the scaffold should confess or wish to confess, he should be given the body of Jesus Christ, interred in the cemetery, and recommended in holy prayers; but let us not on that account be deceived by the misrepresentations of men who review history with the same eyes as those with which they at present travel through Catholic countries. “I am of opinion,” says Manzoni, “that in Italy among those who run the deplorable career of crime there are in our days, (and he might have gone farther back) few or none superstitious, and many who do not care at all for the things of religion.” These portraits of men issuing from the sacred tribunals to commit sins of every kind, these assassins described by Sismondi, “who observe meagre with devotion,” are after all, only fictions of northern travellers, who imagine that every outlaw has a profound veneration for the church, and is a strict observer of the ecclesiastical precepts *. The real histories furnished in the sacred tribunals of Italy and Spain, are parallel to that affecting story of St. John reclaiming the young robber, which is so beautifully told by St. Clemens Alexandrinus, at the end of his book entitled “*Quis Dives Salvetur.*” But if the doctrine and general language of the middle ages respecting penance be more calculated to make men tremble than to criticise, what shall we say of the examples recorded in history, which show what was then understood practically by contrition? Not to revert to what we observed in the fourth book, or to anticipate what we shall meet with hereafter in the sanctuaries of peace, only reflect, reader, upon any of the innumerable instances of profound compunction for sin which are attested in the ancient annals. The unblessed tears of Rinaldo in chivalrous fable may represent the beginning of this state,

* *Osservazioni sulla Morale Catholica*, 215.

" His looks he downward cast and nought he said,
 Griev'd, sham'd, sad, he would have died fain,
 And oft he wish'd the earth or ocean wide
 Would swallow him and so his errors hide."

Yet this sorrow was only caused by the consciousness of having spent many days luxuriously in the palace of Armida *. Ah, when would the carpet champions of modern times be similarly moved by the mere view of the bright panoply of saintly warriors? St. Thomas of Canterbury, had consented to receive the constitutions of Clarendon, and that act of compliance was sufficient immediately after to fill his breast with the sadness of death. "Unhappy man," cried he, as he rode back from the assembly, "I see the English church enslaved for ever in punishment of my sins! It had needs be so, I came from the court and not from the church. I was a hunter of beasts before being a pastor of men; the lover of mimics and dogs is become the conductor of souls. Behold me then abandoned by God †!" Pope Clement V. is named in the most scornful terms by the very historians who nevertheless conclude with the testimony of Villani, who says that after the trial of the templars he never smiled more: this sensibility of conscience could sometimes even give a dignity which is due to force of soul, as when Manin, the last Doge of Venice, fainted the moment after he had taken the oath to Austria according to the treaty of Campo Formio.

Let us pass to another question on which the moderns and the followers of antiquity are at issue, concerning which, if any one should ask the former immediately, as Socrates says of the sophists, "like brass that is struck upon, which emits a loud and lengthened sound, they break out into an endless discourse, unless you take great care to stop them short ‡." Their constant complaint, for one cannot say objection, is, that the Catholic church, by means of indulgences, destroyed the foundations of all morality and justice. Truly, to hear them on this point as on many others, may remind one of the comment of Guibert de Nogent, on the famous question addressed to our first parents, "Cur præcepit vobis Deus ne comederitis de

* XVI. 31.

† Vita Quadrip. 41.

‡ Protagoras.

omni ligno paradisi ?” “ for,” saith he, “ it is the custom of obscure persons to discuss the highest things rashly and proudly. Thus the serpent begins by naming God before all created things, and ends by imputing to him what he never said; for not of every tree of paradise but only of one particular tree did he forbid man to eat *.” They say that the church destroyed the foundations of morality by her doctrine of indulgences: they say so, but we are not to credit every word that they say. Not hastily according to the passion of men, “ sed caute et longanimitate res est secundum Deum ponderranda.” Naaman was angry and went away in disdain when he heard of the terms of God’s indulgence, though it was a salutary advice which was given him by his own servants to obey the prophet †. Men speak against indulgences without consideration, without consistency. In the Christian religion as in nature, every thing is indulgence. Baptism, like natural birth, is the grand indulgence by which the renovation of man commences; and as St. Augustin adds, “ neither can the rest of his life, from the age when he comes to the use of reason, be without the remission of sins, however inclined he may be to justice ‡.” Therefore, the church feeling the depth of this mystery, and being perfectly sensible to the inadequacy of the terms offered to sinful man, says in addressing the Almighty, “ Thou who dost particularly manifest thy omnipotence by sparing and showing mercy §.”

That the canonical penalties of the primitive church were the origin of indulgences is clear, and that the love of justice and the desire of greater union with God inspired their institution is no less certain. If thou shalt hear henceforth another origin assigned of that which sounds so execrable in modern books, I forewarn thee now, that none by falsehood may beguile thee of the truth. Attend to what saith the council of Nice, “ Whoever being penetrated with the fear of God shall testify by his tears, patience, and good works, that he has really changed his life, shall by the merit of prayers be re-

* Moralium Geneseos, Lib. II. c. 3.

† Kings iv. 5.

‡ S. August. Enchirid. cap. 17.

§ Coll. tenth Sund. after Pent.

established in communion after accomplishing the time marked for this station. Besides this, the bishop may use still greater mildness, but as for those who are not so touched, and who are little concerned about their condition, and who think it enough to come to the church, their time of penance must not be shortened *." "The right of granting indulgences," say the canons, "that is of remitting a whole or a part of the temporal punishment of sin, was given by Christ to the apostles and their successors in the grant of the power of binding and loosing, which is exercised in its supreme degree by the head of the church, and under him with limits by other bishops and priests †." Clearly there was no more difficulty in believing the existence of this power in reference to the suffering than to the militant church; for whether it was exercised over the living penitents who smote their breasts, or over those spirits who prayed for others' prayers to hasten on their state of blessedness, the authority was equally above nature, and divine. To the arguments of those who deny the reality of any temporal punishment hereafter, a reply has been already made in a former book. Truly the answer of Sir Thomas More deserves their attention, "for as for purgatory," saith he, "though they thinke there be none, yet sith they denie not, that all the corps of Christendom by so many hundred yeres, have believed the contrarie, and among them all the olde interpretors of Scripture from the apostles' daies downe to our owne time, of whom they denie not many for holy saintes; that I dare not believe these men against all those, these men must of their curtesie hold my poore feare excused. And I beseeche our Lord heartily for them, that when they depart out of this wretched world, they find no purgatorie at all; so God kepe them from hel." Vengeance of heaven, how shouldst thou be feared by all who think upon that region of eternal peace into which nothing defiled can enter, by all who have sought to know themselves, and who have read of that trial of every work hereafter by refining flame! O these sins, these common venial sins, how hugely and gigantically they swell out! How horrible it is to see their consequences unfolding themselves far away in the

* Con. Nic. c. 12.

† Joan. Devoti Instit. Canonic. Lib. II. tit. III. § 1.

realms of the future ! how they take root and grow up riotously in after generations ! What hope for man but in remission and indulgence !

Here again, as in the question of penance, the doctrine of the church need only be stated to be at once justified. To say that this ascribes to human virtues an efficacy beyond what sacred wisdom warrants, is to evince a total ignorance of the Catholic doctrine, for in order that works may merit it is required that the party who worketh be in a state of grace and an adopted child of God ; so that all works are excluded from meriting, which are performed by one who is not in a state of grace, that is, who wanteth true faith, true hope, true charity ; and besides the free promise and covenant of God is necessary, and these very works take their merit from Christ. They say that the merits of the saints, and the sacrifice of the mass, which are the secondary source of indulgence, are an injury to the all-sufficient sacrifice of the cross, "but" asks Bossuet, "when Christ coming into the world devoted himself wholly to God that he might be in place of those victims which did not please him * , did he do an injury to his immolation on the cross ? and when he now appears before God for us † , does he take away from that oblation with which he once offered himself ? And when he ever intercedeth for us ‡ , does he show that the intercession was imperfect which he made for us with tears at his death § . Nay, on that account is the sacrifice of the cross perfect, because whatever preceded and whatever follows it are wholly referred to it ; the antecedents as a preparation, the consequents as its consummation and application. If you say that indulgences have been abused, we may reply with the angel of the school, that there is nothing which human malice cannot abuse, since it abuses even the goodness of God || ." But then, on the other hand, we must not at once admit every thing to be an abuse which the moderns affirm to be such. Hear what St Ambrose saith. " We have many subsidiary means by which we can redeem our sins. Have you money ? Redeem your sin. The Lord is not venal, but you yourself are venal :

* Heb. x. 25.

† Id. ix. 24.

‡ Id. vii. 25.

§ Id. v. 17.

|| Summ. Theolog. P. III. 9. 3. art. 8.

redeem yourself by your works; redeem yourself by your money *." We have before seen that the cathedrals, monasteries, hospitals, bridges, and other public monuments of the middle age, are so many memorials of this kind of redemption: nevertheless, Thomassinus remarks, "that St. Petrus Damianus, who relates the compensations appointed by the church in the middle ages for the remission of the temporal penalty of sins, was so far from suspecting the church of any view to her own emolument, that the thought never appears to have entered his mind, though against the plague of avarice and corruption he boils over if he can but detect a trace of it any where †." "Sane cavendum est," say the decrees of Ives de Chartres, "ne quisquam existimet infanda illa crimina, qualia qui agunt regnum Dei non possidebunt quotidie perpetrandam et eleemosynis quotidie redimenda. In melius est quippe vita mutanda et per eleemosynas de peccatis præteritis est propitiandus Deus ‡." That abuses, however, did prevail in the fifteenth century, in the dispensation of indulgences, was never questioned; but to qualify rightly and yet in language of moderation the inference drawn from that fact by modern historians, would be difficult. Manzoni in admitting and deplored the evil, asks, "Do the excessive concessions of indulgences interfere with the principles of morality?" To which he answers, "No, at no time." The manner of dispensing indulgences, as Bossuet observes, regards discipline. This being the case, their excessive concession would be an abuse. Now the Catholic church is constituted in such a manner that abuses can never alter the principles of morality, because these are without the sphere of discipline and are placed in that of faith. So that every essential principle of morality being an article of faith, it can only be destroyed by a doctrine establishing a contrary principle. Therefore the principles of morality remain untouched notwithstanding the possible excess in the concession of indulgences §. Besides, to whom were

* S. Ambrosii, Lib. de Elia et Jejunio, cap. 20.

† De Vet. et Nova Ecclesiæ Disciplin. Pars III. Lib. I. cap. 30.

‡ Iponis Carnot. Decret. Pars XIII. de Speculativis Sentent. cap. 121.

§ Osservazioni sulla Morale Catholica, 197.

indulgences applicable? “The prelates of the church,” says Duns Scotus, who states and refutes the most acute and subtle objections to indulgences *, “can from the treasury of the church confer indulgences on members of the church, that is, on men existing in charity, otherwise they are not members capable of receiving the influence of others, as a dead member in a natural body cannot receive an influence or any nourishment from others. ‘*Unusquisque onus suum portabit,*’ say the objectors. True, but on the other hand, ‘*alter alterius onera portate;*’ the first should be understood of the eternal punishment in which no one is punished for another, although temporally one man is well punished for another even by God†.” No one unworthy of having his temporal penalty paid by another’s satisfaction, could truly gain the fruit of an indulgence; for whoever neglected to satisfy by himself was unworthy to have the satisfaction of others applied to the discharge of his debt ‡. Besides, what was an indulgence in relation to the eternal law of justice? It was after all but part of it. William of Paris says, “that many prudent men affirm a dispensation to be a law, and not a diminution of law, or a derogation from a law, because the cause for which it is granted renders it so just that the legislator himself would have required it. You hear of vows being changed by dispensation; but how? Dante answers that question with theological precision—

“ Nor deem of any change as less than vain,
If the last bond be not within the new
Included, as the quatre in the six §.”

And who were the persons who abused indulgences? Were they infidels who rejected and scorned whatever came through the church? Were they libertines who never took the trouble to listen to their conditions? Were they devout persons who knew that to gain them, those interior dispositions are absolutely essential which remove the possibility of their being abused? Moreover, what these objectors call mere external observances did mean and involve something more in the common estimation of men than they suspect. When Henry the Second

* Duns Scoti Miscellaneorum, 9. IV.

† Id. 9. VI.

‡ La Hogue de Purgatorio, Art. III.

§ Parod. V.

pretended to be reconciled with St. Thomas, by the interposition of the king of France, in the interview at Chinou, king Henry ordered that for mass of reconciliation, a mass for the dead should be said, because at that the kiss of peace was not given *. Queen Jeanne persuaded the Regent of France to have an interview with Charles, king of Navarre. A treaty was signed ; the bishop of Lisieux said mass, and would have given the communion to both ; but the king of Navarre, who believed in the religion which he outraged, refused to receive under pretence of his having broken his fast †. If even against political interests these principles were proof how much more must they have prevailed in the ordinary action of less excited life ?

The instructors of the middle ages were continually reminding the people of what Masillon observed in his charge on the publication of the Jubilee, in the year 1724. "Let us not think," said he, "that the graces of the church have purified us, if they have not changed us. Let us depend upon her indulgence only in proportion as we can depend upon our own sincere repentance." "No one besides," as Sardagna remarks, "without an especial revelation could be certain that he had gained an indulgence ‡."

I am aware that from this very solicitude of the clergy to guard against the misinterpretation of indulgences, and their frequent admonitions against being content with observing certain religious practices, while neglecting indispensable duties, some writers have argued that such an abuse was common. Manzoni replies to them as follows : "To understand this subject, we must distinguish two degrees, or rather two kinds of goodness, that with which the world is content, and that desired by the Gospel, and inculcated by its ministers. The world, for its own sake, desires that men should refrain from crimes, but the Gospel requires not alone the avoiding disorders, and the observance of blameless manners in the eyes of men, but the spirit of Jesus Christ crucified. It is the want of this spirit which is the object of the Catholic priests' complaint, who fears lest men, in the external

* Vit. Quadrip. 109.

† La France sous les cinq Premiers Valois, II. 125.

‡ Sardagna Theolog. Dogmat. tom. VIII. art. VII. c. 8.

practice of religious duties, by living in the world, should forget the supernatural end which ought to direct the Christian. But those whom he thus advises and cautions, are men whom the world has no right to bewail : they are the best among its children, and if the church is not content with that degree of virtue, it is because she excites them to proceed to an order of holiness, of which the world has no knowledge. Having no other interest than the salvation of men, she requires the virtue which tends to perfection, not that which may be useful to the preacher *.”

Finally, if we consider the nature of the indulgences, though we should omit to speak of those great and arduous works of charity and piety, to which they gave rise during the middle ages, and should only confine our view to the interior and spiritual exercises which were implied in their acquisition, it will require no singular perspicuity of genius, and no bias in favour of antiquity, to discern their admirable tendency in relation to the exercise of the highest justice. No doubt the obligation of many actions, required as conditions of indulgences, seem incommensurate with the offered grace ; but as Manzoni observes, “ it is impossible to conceive a system of morality or rule of life, in which there are not obligations of various kinds, and of different degrees of importance. The perfect morality would be that in which all the obligations would proceed from one principle, and be directed to one sole end, and that most holy ;—and such is the Catholic morality.” If there were indulgences for those who accompanied the holy viaticum from the church to the sick man’s house, and thence back to the church, if there were indulgences on visiting certain churches, on assisting at the dedication of others, as in the year 1040, to all who repaired to St. Victor’s, at Marseilles, and to all who assisted at the dedication of the church of Monte Cassino, if there was an indulgence for all who being contrite and confessed, should enter the cemetery of St. Callixtus, pope and martyr, where a hundred and seventy-four thousand martyrs were buried with forty-six popes—*qui omnes ex magna tribulacione venerunt, et ut haeredes fierent in domo Domini mortis*

* Osservaz. sulla Morale Cattolica, 222.

supplicium pro Christi nomine pertulerunt *, if there were indulgences for all who repeated certain prayers, on hearing the great bell of the cathedral of Grenada tolled every afternoon at three o'clock, in memory of the deliverance of that city from the Moors, that being the hour when the Cardinal, Don Pedro Gonzalez de Mendoza, planted the cross on the highest tower of the Alhambra, while the Count of Tendilla displayed the kingly banner of Castille, and Don Gutierre de Cardenas that of St. Iago, while Ferdinand and Isabella sunk upon their knees, exclaiming, *Non nobis, Domine, sed tibi sit gloria*, on which spot a chapel was immediately erected, which stands to the present day,—the one motive by which these and a thousand other similar exercises were converted into channels of heavenly grace, was charity, the union of the soul with God, or, in other words, the love of God and the love of man. Separate from this principle, many of these acts may indeed seem trifling and inconsiderable, but as Hugo of St. Victor says, “ *in parvo opere magna devotio potest esse †.*” A pilgrim at least will be little disposed to cavil here, who remembers what fervent devotion was excited in his breast, when at Rome and elsewhere he visited such places, when he kissed the cross upon the gates of St. Paul and of St. Lorenzo—when he ascended upon his knees those mystic steps which recall the passion of the man-God—when he saw lifted over him that rod of discipline at the threshold of the holy Apostles—when he drank from the fountains at the Salvian waters where the chosen One received his crown. There is, one might say, transferring the poet’s image to express higher things, a tide in the spiritual affairs of men, which when taken at the flood, leads on to paradise ; omitted, all the voyage of their life seems left unprotected by influence divine ; we must take the current of justice, as of human felicity, when it serves, or lose our ventures, for, as Cardan saith, *nostra omnia momentanea sunt*. Moments there are in life, especially in its early years, when from the presence of such objects as recall the mind to a sense of religion, to a memory of all that the divine Jesus suffered, and of all that his saints in successive

* Aringhi Rom. Subter. 232.

† Hug. S. Vict. De Sacramentis, Pars XIV. 3.

ages have endured, men, the most cold and thoughtless, feel suddenly inflamed with a seraphic ardour of spirit, to love and serve God with all their heart, and all their mind, and all their strength, and are ready to exclaim with a most generous passion, though we should die with thee, yet will we not betray thee in any wise. Oh heavens! were man but constant, he were perfect; that one error fills him with faults, and makes him run through all sins. Now, the object of these indulgences was to make him, in regard to these impressions, constant; it was to multiply and protract these blessed intervals; to make, as it were, the time of flood in the soul recur at short intervals, in order that he might have many ventures, many periods of excitement; it was to give him habits of making acts of faith, hope, and charity, so that at length, from many repetitions and returns, becoming constant, he might attain to the perfection and immortal felicity of his nature. The exercises to which indulgences were attached, were generally such as of all others in the moral order that can be conceived, are most worthy of an immortal intelligence. There were indulgences attached to the daily recital of the Trisagion and Gloria Patri *, to making acts of faith, hope, and charity †, to praying for the exaltation of the church, the peace and concord of Christian princes, and the extirpation of error ‡, to the invocation of the holy name of Jesus, to the examination of conscience, to the conversion of sinners in withdrawing them from immorality, heresy, blasphemy, detraction, or calumny, to the reconciliation of enemies, to the showing reverence to Christ's blessed mother, to meditation on the cross, or visiting the stations, to prayer in memory of our Lord's crucifixion on Fridays, at three o'clock §, to spending the three hours of agony on Good Friday in prayer or meditation, to visiting devoutly, with proper dispositions, the seven churches of Rome ||, to the recitation of the Angelus, or the Regina Caeli three times every day ¶, to the sanctification of the month of May by devoting it to the contemplation of the graces of Mary, to the recitation of the prose stabat mater **, to receiving communion on the

* By Clement XIII.

† Bened. XIII. XIV.

‡ Greg. XIII.

§ Bened. XIV.

|| St. Greg. the Great.

¶ Bened. XIII. XIV.

** Innocent XI.

festival of St. Louis Gonzagua, the patron of youth *, to the instruction of others in mental prayer †, or in the Christian doctrine ‡, to performing the works of mercy, nourishing three poor persons in honour of the holy family, to the visiting of hospitals, or houses of refuge, to the visitation of prisoners, to the enabling of the poor to marry, to wearing medals, or crucifixes, or chaplets, that had been given to one's self, which had touched the holy places, or the relics of the holy land §, to a good preparation for death, to an act of resignation daily renewed ||. Are these exercises trivial and ridiculous? Is the hope of grace, upon condition of performing them with the dispositions implied, unjust or inconsistent with the wisdom of God, that learned men of the modern discipline should place the Apostolic Brief, confining it in their cabinets of curiosities amidst the idols of Egypt, to be displayed before the white, upturned wondering eyes of fools, that fall back as if afraid to gaze upon it? Truly, that indulgences should furnish mirth in the circle of libertines, or in the school of those sophists who have an exchequer of words, and no other treasure to give their followers, will surprise no one; but, setting aside all theological argument, he that cannot discern the force and facility which they yield to virtue, whatever diplomas he may have taken out, or whatever academic walks he may have haunted, methinks should not be chronicled for wise.

CHAPTER IX.

We have seen the heroic and supernatural character of the Catholic morality, but there are still many remarkable points of difference distinguishing it from the system

* Bened. XIII.

† Bened. XIV.

‡ Clement XII.

§ Innocent XI.

|| Vide Manuel des Dévotions et Indulgences autorisées par le Saint Siège.

of human philosophers, and from that of the modern societies in general, of which I have not yet given an historical illustration. To contrast the manners of the Christian republic in its happiest ages, with those of the ancient world, would be a still less subtle exercise than tracing the contrast between the Gospel and the philosophic writings of the Gentiles. To review the heathen manners falls not to our province; and that writer may indeed be an object of compassion who is condemned to approach a subject so horrible and so revolting. Moreover, there can be but few who need being reminded in general of the revolution which had been wrought in the law and practice of manners by the Redeemer. It confers no benefit, methinks, to compose a picture in hard prominent outlines, or abounding in sharp transitions from light to shadow. It may be left to others, therefore, to represent the contrast between classic and sacred Italy—between the times which beheld by luxury more than Roman conquests, and those when Sybaris was an episcopal see, and Capua a nurse of martyrs. But in answer to those who represent the highest justice and perfect morality, as independent of Catholic manners, fain would I something say. The moral teachers of antiquity are painted by each other with such precision, that we can hardly feel at a loss respecting the character which should be ascribed to them. Who of them, asks Cicero, regards his discipline not as an ostentation of science, but as a law of life? Some are addicted to such levity and boasting, that it would be better for them never to have learned aught. Some are greedy of money; others of glory; many are the slaves of lust, so that their discourse differs prodigiously from their life*. In the most exquisite of all the Platonic writings we have the same contrast to the severity of Catholic manners in the language of Agatho's philosophic guests, who allude with such effrontery to their yesterday's debauch, desiring now one and all, that there may be a temperate meeting and no drunkenness, particularly as they have not yet recovered from the effects of their last banquet, agreeing that they should now only drink for pleasure, and not to intoxication†. Nepos, writing to Cicero, says, “So far am I from regarding philosophy as the mistress of life,

* Tuscul. II. 4.

† Plato, Symposium, cap. 4.

and the source of happy life, that I think no men have such need of masters to instruct them in living, as the greatest part of those who are occupied in their disputations ; for I see that the men who prescribe rules of continence and modesty most artfully in the school, live devoted to all kinds of lust. Seneca was of the same opinion, and Cicero repeatedly shows that the men who had any virtue in Greece and Rome were not formed by the discipline of philosophy, but by following ancient traditions.” S. Clemens Alexandrinus presses hard upon the heathen philosophers, reminding them of the manners of their own heroic models. “*Phœnix*,” saith he, “was the tutor of Achilles, and Adrastus of the sons of Crœsus, Leonidas of Alexander, and Nausithous of Philip. *Phœnix* was abandoned to the love of women ; Adrastus was a run-away ; Leonidas did not subdue the pride of the Macedonians, nor did Nausithous cure the drunkard of Pella. The Thracian Zopurus was not able to restrain the licentiousness of Alcibiades ; and Sikinnus, the tutor of Themistocles’ sons, used to be caught dancing the Satyr’s dance *.” Socrates and Glaucus agree with the opinion so eloquently proclaimed by modern statesmen and legislators, that a man will do many things while alone, which he would not dare to do if any eyes were upon him, and which he would not tolerate in any one else ; and that he will differ greatly when alone in secret, and when he is exposed to the view of other men †. “Who ascribed the highest authority to the Roman senate ?” asks an orator who carried his love of heathen antiquity to extravagance. “He who stript it of all. Who consulted the Chaldeans and the Magi ? The same man who banished them from the city. The same was cruel, and in semblance kind, grasping, and able to pass for liberal. He built temples, and he laughed at religion ; he rejected aliens, and he despised his country ; he did not approve of fraud in an enemy, without which he never approached either friend or foe. But a man, wholly wicked, is never without an appearance of virtue ‡.” Varro thought it necessary to deceive the multitude, and leave it in the superstition of the civil theology ; and St. Augustin exclaims, “*Spectacles of turpitude and*

* Clemens Alex. Pæd. Lib. I. c. 7.

† Plato, de Repub. Lib. X.

‡ Heinsii Orat. XVII.

licence of vanities are instituted at Rome, not by the vices of men, but by the order of your gods *." What a contrast to the teachers of the Christian ages, who taught the people of God what was between the holy and the corrupt, between the clean and the unclean? It is true there are lofty views of morality and justice in the writings of some of the philosophers; but, as Persius said, men regarded more what Jupiter did than what Plato taught, or Cato judged. And after all what were these philosophers, in regard to morals, if compared to any humble obscure monk of the middle age? "We do not compare Plato," says St. Augustin, "to any holy angel of highest God, nor to any true prophet, nor to any Apostle, nor to any martyr of Christ, nor to any Christian man †."

Pliny says, "Nihil esse miserius vel superbius homine." But when the house was built after the captivity, when the holy church arose after the reign of demons, it might have been truly said, nothing more happy than man in the attainment of the beatitudes, or more humble in the accomplishment of their law. The deeds of heathen virtue cannot stand the test of the Catholic standard. "That Lucretia should have chosen death," says St. Augustin, "argued not the charity of modesty, but the infirmity of shame. This was a Roman woman, too greedy of praise. Christian women would not have done this who live after suffering such things, who neither punish others in themselves nor add a crime of their own to the crime of others ‡." The detestable iniquity of Junius Brutus was useless to the republic, although to perpetrate this crime,

"Vicit amor patriæ laudumque immensa cupido."

St. Augustin, in two lines, reveals the whole difference between the Christian chivalry and the ancient heroic character, but it is a separation as wide as between heaven and earth; "for the latter," he says, "did not love glory on account of justice, but seemed to love justice on account of glory §. It is useless, however, to remain here any longer; let us proceed, though we shall have to enter upon a more painful investigation, having to point out the contrast between

* De Civ. Dei, Lib. I. 32.

† Id. Lib. I. 19.

‡ Id. Lib. II. 14.

§ Id. Lib. V. 22.

Catholic manners, the manners of faith, which prevailed during the ages involved in this history, and those of the modern societies, which have abandoned that faith for views and principles which they pronounce to be more worthy of highly civilized and enlightened men. "Morality, at present, is better understood," says the great master of our age, whose fables are recommended by ministers of Germany, as the best sources of religious instruction. If so, our whole course hitherto must have led you, reader, in a false direction; but the facts and observations which I propose to offer, will enable, I conceive, every impartial judge to discover the fallacy of that opinion. When the new religions were first set up publicly in Christendom, it was little thought by those who changed the rule of faith, that the rule of manners was also to be revolutionized. It is true there were some wise heads, which predicted that this would be inevitably the final result; and it is certain, that in practice there was already abundant ground to fear that their predictions would be verified. Even at the first moment, when it was proposed to introduce into a Christian community the fatal principle of the innovators, there were signs of the future ruin.

"Instamus tamen immemores, cæcique furore,
Et monstrum infelix sacra sistimus arce *."

As Pindar says, "The credible and incredible are often confounded for a time, but the days which succeed are the most certain witnesses †." Those witnesses have been heard, and great indeed must be the weakness and obscurity of the mind which still waits for more. The kind of readers who choose such matter as that which I indite, for subject of their thoughts, men bred to gentle studies, and accustomed to the sweet sounds of divine philosophy, are in general but little acquainted with the facts to which we must now briefly allude, and still less inclined to attend to those who speak of them. The detail of such manners, as distinguished the chief agents in the revolution of the sixteenth century, can but seldom arrest the thoughts of men who enjoy the ineffable charms of calm meditation on truths of eternal interest, and of infinite sublimity: philosophy leads men to other walks.

* Virg. *AEn.* II. 244.

† Olymp. I.

What is it to the Christian church whether she be opposed by a Trajan or a Nero? under a senate assembling in the forum, or under a new race of priests teaching a different doctrine, seated in her own ancient temples? She calls upon her children to withdraw themselves from the things that pass with time, and leave the dead to bury their dead. But in order to shew what was the justice of the ages of faith, some retrospect of the men who hastened their decline becomes necessary, and with whatever reluctance one may turn from the spectacle of a renovated to that of a fallen and still prostrate world, it is well to form an estimate of that system of morality which was made to supersede the ancient manners of the original universal society of christians. Hastening then our steps as those who find their path beset with objects of disgust or terror, we find ourselves at first in fearful company, surrounded with the routiers or soldiers, resembling the liberating armies of our time, men without faith or law, impious as the troops that have lately ravaged Portugal and Spain, under the influence of the modern opinions, for they are the creation of an opinion, and barbarous as the wildest savages. Those men were in the service of the early heretics, who first gave note of coming evils; and what sort of reform think you, reader, could those who employed such instruments have had at heart? Michelet says, that to judge by some facts, their history might be read in that of the mercenaries of antiquity, in their execrable war against Carthage*. It is important to bear in mind, that the present systems, which were established on the abolition of the ancient faith, arose at an epoch of horrible fame in the history of mankind. It was during the execrable reign of gold, during the hunger and thirst after riches, when avarice had quenched the love of good, without which is no reform possible, that the religious constitution of so many states gave way. Observe, that the agents of the change were men not who resisted, but who followed the spirit of their age. The history of them all may be summed up by saying, that they were in the van of their generation, and worthy of being so; with justice and freedom ever on their tongue, they only availed themselves of the elements which they found already prepared in a

* Hist. de France, II. 432.

corrupt society, like the Pedros and Christinas of later times.

“ Surely,” says a keen observer, a child of justice who found means in a foreign land to make his voice be heard in justification of wisdom, “ surely, if a man should ask Murray and Morton, those two pillars of reformation in Scotland, Orange and Horn in the Netherlands, Conde and the Admiral in France, the dukes of Somerset and Northumberland in England, the princes of Saxony, Sweden, and Denmark, and the rest of the Lutheran chiefs in Germany, whether they had not some by-ends of avarice, ambition, and other sinister and worldly nature, when they seemed to be most hot and zealously transported, it might trouble them all perhaps what to answer *.” What may the self-commissioned messengers say unto the captain of the church when they shall see that volume spread to view, in the which all their dispraise is written? There amidst the actions of that king who first made Alfred’s renowned isle apostate, shall be read, of despotism, of unprincipled ministers, of a rapacious aristocracy, of a servile parliament. There shall be read the thirsting pride that made fool alike the English and the Scot, impatient of the winged yoke, there shall be seen the anatomy of that work which was begun by the murderer of his wives, continued by the murderer of his brother, and completed by the murdereress of her guest. The new evangelists shall see recorded there their table-talk, their thrice transmitted wives, and all the filthy doings from which they came flushed, to tread down like dogs and swine the holy things and pearls of the faith. They of Norway too, and the Dane, with the feudal lords of Saxony and those who ruled Zurich and Berne, who would not suffer provisions to be supplied to the Catholic inhabitants of the mountain and forest cantons, shall be exposed with them who counterfeited ill the coin of Henry, and caused groans and wailings in the streets, which once were blest with the feet of holy men that ran dispensing peace. Those whose minds have attained to that high and delicate sense of justice which belongs to the ages of faith, may not only be unwilling but even actually unable to explore this history. The agent at this epoch, whether

* *Jerusalem and Babel*, I. 113.

the mere instrument of others' passions, the ignoble and insane preacher, or the sly potentate who with interested motives encouraged and promoted him, is a character which they can hardly estimate; for according to the sublime idea of the poet, we may say truly that to their eyes he is invisible, such a cloud of crimes envelopes him.

τοῖον ἐπὶ κνέφας ἀνδρὶ μύσος πεπόταται.*

It will be sufficient, however, to show that from the time when morality is said to have become better understood, the manners of those who embraced the new opinions were very different from those which had formerly distinguished men who hungered and thirsted after justice. In proposing such a retrospect, I feel no alarm lest I should offend any person; for the vulgar and irascible crowd comes not here to feed. I seek to give pain to no one, much less to those whose genius and disposition to embrace every kind of good, I have always been accustomed to admire, and in whose manly and generous natures I well know may be realized so many bright enchanting hopes of youthful friendship. To contrast the young wanderers on the erring way within these islands, with any class of men at present immediately around them, would not, perhaps, be the part of one who loves heroic and divine antiquity. There are many who suppose themselves Protestants, without knowing on what ground that title rests, whose thoughts and sentiments might be compared to the fresh current of a gentle living stream which it is always delightful to pass near, even though one must not follow its deviations; and on the other hand, there are persons who have never borne the name of protestors against the ancient faith, whose minds resemble either a turbid torrent or a dull pool, stagnant and infectious, that can neither renew the earth nor reflect heaven. This whole discourse is concerning either the past,—and what is there in the dark wretched years which have elapsed since the first apostacy which should render its praise displeasing to a young and unpolluted race,—or that new offspring with which God continually fecundates his church; a class, which must include themselves if they would follow where all that is

* *Æschyl. Eumenid. 378.*

noble and profound hath fled. These true lovers of wisdom will therefore not be quick to take offence at words which only invite them to proceed on to this peace. They will feel that it would be insane to identify an accusation against historic personages, or against principles, with a stupid attempt to depreciate any of the generous men who in the shade of private life may now, through ignorance and the mysterious order of Providence, be following, externally at least, in the track of the horrid procession which has passed as it were, through the night of history, spreading terror and desolation around it, and breaking the sweet stillness of a redeemed, or rather new-created world, with the terrific sound of civil and religious wars — spectral-like and ghastly procession, of which at present, only the memory seems to remain, excepting that one beholds the fearful wreck with which it has strewed the earth, and some innocent captives whom that foul crew has left spell-bound and miserably attached to the different objects that lined its way. Were we to view history with the eyes of modern speculators, there would be no place for the present argument; for the founders and propagators of the new opinions in religion and in morals were, according to them, amongst the salt of the earth. But thus do all such men. If their purgation did consist in words, they are as innocent as grace itself. But the light seems again to dawn, at least to a considerable class of readers, upon history, and it is no longer possible to support the new opinions by ascribing to their founders that attribute of justice which in common with ourselves they are obliged to believe one of the distinguishing marks by which may be known the church of Jesus Christ. The world begins to remark, that wherever these men pretended to weed, nothing appeared after them but briars and thorns. If the house of Luther had been the vine of the Lord, and the men of Calvin his pleasant plant, the eternal course of Providence would have been retrograde, for then in ages of grace and after the Messiah, it might be said that he looked for judgment and behold iniquity, for justice and behold a cry. What sort of converts the innovators generally made in France, may be learned from referring to any of the contemporary writers. Paradin in his epistle prefixed to his history of Lyons, addressed to the consuls and syndics of that city in the

year 1573, appeals to them in these terms. "It is notorious that since these new religions, if open force ought to be named religion, have been introduced into France, all estates have become corrupt: youth without discipline, old age without examples; all kinds of blasphemy, vice, and enormity, are the fruits of these novel opinions. 'Exitus acta probat.'" Again in his history, speaking of their having demolished the churches of St. Just, of St. Irenæus, and the Abbey of the Isle-Barbe, he exclaims, "Would to God that they had built living temples of manners and virtues as they have reduced to ruin and desolation these dead stones which offended no one *." Most remarkable also in this respect, are the letters of another magistrate, Stephen Pasquier †; but the learned reader will for himself find abundant and equally curious evidence, so that we need not delay here. The moral deterioration, the exuberance of crime and woe which ensued in Germany and England, is a fact which is confirmed even by the testimony of the chiefs themselves. Fountainhall said in the time of James the Second, "God raises up men to appear for the Protestant interest, who were not very strict in any religion ‡." In fact he might have said, who fly all disciplines, like Epicurus.

The German nobles who came forward as the protectors of Luther, and with whom he eventually sided against the oppressed peasants, were robber knights who knew of no justice or authority but the sword. It would have been a curious scene to have been present in the castle on the Rhine at the theological dialogue between Frank von Sickingen who could not read, and the other famous knight who espoused the reform, when the real question which concerned them was how to plunder their neighbour, the bishop of Treves. The wild boars of Arden were in no age very tender to spare the vineyard of the church. Without attempting to examine who are the Frank von Sickingens that have come most forward in modern times as champions of that cause, defending the preachers with pamphlets from their feudal castles, and holding up the sword to those who are not satisfied with their logic, one may be permitted to observe that

* Hist. de Lyon, Lib. II. 106.

† Lib. IV. 12.

‡ State Trials, XI. 1175.

the existence of the religion which they espoused at this day, is a proof that the order of Providence must have required a continued series of the same men; for it is a law of nature that things should exist and prevail only by adhering to the principle of their existence. Mahometanism, which was essentially barbarous, and having conquest for its object, no sooner attempted in Spain to become cultivated and peaceful, than it was vanquished and driven out. Similarly, a religion which is essentially a principle of separation, disunion, and destruction, connected with the misrepresentation and injustice in which it originated, can only endure by the transmission and exercise of the same spirit; and whenever a tendency to Catholic union, and a desire to build up in imitation of Catholicism, whenever a love of justice in charity shall begin to supersede the original virulence, the thing, under whatever name it may be distinguished, will not only be “in danger,” but will necessarily and irremediably expire.

The teachers of the new doctrines were guilty from the beginning of that irrational complaint which Socrates ridicules in the sophists, who, when they pretended to teach men virtue, would yet often accuse their own disciples of ingratitude and injustice towards themselves, as having received great benefit from them without making them any return or stipend or grace. So that they admit those to be evil whom they have rendered good. “What greater absurdity than this?” asks the Athenian sage *. Burton was one of those moralists who forget that men cannot always justly complain of the things which they may lament. It is a remedy, indeed, for the evil on which he treats to read the lamentations which he pours forth on the want of patronage which his fellow-divines and university-men endured. “Tell them ‘tis a sin,” saith he, speaking of their patrons, who spoil the new legal church, “they will not believe it; denounce and terrify; they have cauterized consciences. Call them base, irreligious, profane barbarians, pagans, atheists, epicures, as some of them surely are, ‘Euge! optime,’ they cry, and applaud themselves for having money—a base, profane, epicurean hypocritical rout. Let them pretend what zeal they will, their bones are full of epi-

* Plato, Gorgias.

curean hypocrisy and atheistical marrow : they are worse than heathens *." You observe, reader, that the scene which is now passing before our eyes has been acted before. Avoiding, however, as far as possible, the unpleasant task of accusation, let us only observe those features of the morality of our Catholic ancestors which present a striking contrast to the principles or conduct of the men who pretended to have more enlightened views of justice, and who substituted new opinions in religion for the ancient faith. Who is there then that does not anticipate me in bearing testimony in the first place to their singular love of truth ? Open any of these volumes written by men of the middle ages. What candour, what conscience, what industry, what distrust of themselves, what unnecessary revelations of secret assistance do you find in them ! " Reader," says John Vasæus of Bruge, " you are besought to look favourably on these my labours, which were not moderate, and to admonish me candidly of my faults, and with a sincere mind ; for you will always find me prepared to commence a pallinode of those things which I have written, and that, not without honourable mention of those by whom I have been justly and benevolently admonished †." Similar to this preface to a Spanish chronicle, is the style of introduction to all the old Catholic works of literature or philosophy. Hear how the illustrious Richard of St. Victor speaks in his work on the Trinity. " I shall take it most gratefully and count it for a great gift, if any truth uttered by me less properly or fittingly should be explained in more appropriate and fitting language by another ‡." Witness again the great Benedictines of a later age. Dom Beaugendre confesses humbly in the preface to his work that the notes have been reviewed and corrected by Massuet ; and Dom Raimond de la Motthe assists De Saussai in his Martyrology of France, and Mabillon in his Acts of the Benedictines, without ever desiring that his name should be associated with their glory, content to employ himself in obscurity for the establishment of truth and the utility of the church §.

* Lib. I. 3.

† Joannis Vasæi Brugensis Rer. Hispanicarum Chronic. cap. 7.

‡ De Trinitate, Pars I. Lib. IV. c. 11.

§ Bibliothèque Hist. et Critique des Auteurs de la Congreg. ed St. Maur, p. 5.

Muratori finds in the ancient historians during the ages of least erudition, "a lucid narrative of events and deeds conjoined with a love of truth * ;" and you need only open any of their treatises intended for general instruction, such as the work of Iona de Institutione Laicale, to be convinced that as in the twenty-seventh chapter of the second book of those Institutes, they were in regard to truth heroic. "Cavendum omnibus modis mendacium," say the canons collected by Ives de Chartres, "sive pro malo, sive etiam pro bono præferri videatur † ." "That I have satisfied the first rule of an historian by an inviolable regard to truth, I can say without boasting," says Trithemius, "since the monastic profession and the Christian faith both compel me to hold falsehood in horror as that which kills the soul ‡ ."

"A religious man," says S. Bonaventura, "must avoid not only a lie, but even whatever may have the shadow of it, as hyperboles, confidence, exaggeration, equivocations, and all manner of leading men into error § ." To play ironically with men the counterpart of Plato's type, who combined in sovereign degree power and injustice, I said was lawful, in a former book, for which some few years past some English critics, catching at the word equivocate, and producing certain Gallican authorities, deemed it for once worth their while to mention the publication of this work, which they registered as teaching heresy, and therefore let the present page be a sign to undeceive whoever doubts the motive of my words. What a horror of falsehood and dissimulation is evinced by all the great standard authors of the middle ages, as in that ladder of Paradise by St. John Climachus, who shows in the same sentence that there was nothing deceitful in the meekness and gentleness of the just, "nihil in illis invenitur callidum," saith he, "nihil durum, nihil simulatum || ." They wrote with a constant sense that God, not the literary public, was to be the judge of their sentences. "We shall endeavour to relate the life of our father Columban," says Iona of Bobbio, "which

* In Script. Rer. Ital. Præfat.

† Iwonis Carnot. Decret. Pars XIII. 50.

‡ In Chronic. Hirsaugiensis.

§ S. Bonaventura, Speculum Novitiorum, cap. 21.

|| Scala Paradisi Grad. XII. Grad. I.

shone in these latter ages, ‘erit tamen nostrorum arbiter dictorum virtutum Largitor immensus *?’’ Observe, too, the manners of that lay society which followed the chivalrous models. “The refinement to which the principle of honour was carried,” says a modern author, “affords many interesting traits of the purest and most admirable regard to truth; and some of the histories of celebrated knights inspire us with delight at the pictures they occasionally give of this devotion.” Dante speaks as a knight of these ages, and not merely as a theologian, when he says,

—“ Ever to that truth
Which but the semblance of a falsehood wears,
A man if possible, should bar his lips,
Since although blameless he incurs reproach †.”

A captain of the middle ages would have been eternally dishonoured who should have sent emissaries with false intelligence in order to secure the destruction of an enemy that only sought to fly, as in the instance recorded by Thucydides ‡. Bold bad men can be found indeed in their annals. A certain cardinal, after a long conversation with Henry Second of England, gave this testimony of him, “Never did I see a man so courageous to lie §.” But under the influence of the modern civilization, it would not be easy to institute a comparison between the different aspirants to that kind of valour whose numbers are so great, and whose claims so equal. Assuredly it argues no prejudice in favour of the middle ages to assert that they were not characterized by that wild excess of insolence which generates a mockery of oaths, and a systematic indifference to truth. Frederick Schlegel makes some profound reflections respecting this dreadful evil which desolates the modern society. “What an effect” saith he, “must such a disposition produce upon the character of a nation? What a power is in lies when an age arrives which is estranged from truth, and which detests truth; when fraud in every conscience leaves a sting, and the spirit of lying, the death of souls, becomes the spirit of the age ||?” We need not refer to philoso-

* Act. Sanct. Ord. S. Bened. Tom. II. † Hell. XVI.

‡ Lib. VII. 73. § Epist. S. Thom. 566.

|| Philosophie des Lebens, 220.

phers for proof or illustration of that power. The events which pass around us now attest it; for deeds which less bespeak the nature of the lion than the fox, have triumphed, and ways of winding subtlety been conducted with such art that the sound has reached the world's limit. It is by dissimulation, flattery, falsehood, various tongues, horrible languages, accents of anger, words that are serpent all, which seem taught by him of whom 'tis said he is a liar, and the father of lies, that the modern civilization, as far as it is opposed to Catholic manners and institutions spreads over Europe, and sweeps away all before it. Ah, what fierce cruelty do these looks bespeak! What tongues are these that syllable speak none, but with ireful gestures angry scorn? This is not reckless passion, reader, but the subtle art which has ever ministered to evil. How are kings who would protect the church, and are, for its sweet sake, the idols of the people, to be deposed and driven out, and nations that would support them to be invaded, under the guise of neutrality, by mercenary armies? institutions the most holy and venerable, intimately associated with true national glory, and most beneficial to the poor, to be suppressed for sake of plunder, under pretence of relieving the state? It is by means of calumnies shouted together by the cursed crew of all who seduce with lies; for when brute force and evil will are backed with subtlety, resistance none avails. From the surface this diabolic contagion passes into the heart of society, and taints domestic life. To read falsehood with composure, and to retail it with avidity, is hardly considered reprehensible; and loquacity is not now so much a certain proof of ignorance, according to the definition of the ancient ascetic, as it is an indication of men having come fresh from their daily banquet of licensed calumnies, wherewith they ne'er enough can glut their tongues. Finally, it is the same power which is employed to perpetuate heresies and schism. Indifference to truth, under the mask of loving it, is the accomplishment most needed when coffers must be filled. Youth is told that it is entitled to examine for itself, and to follow its own judgment, but with an especial proviso, that it is never to exercise that privilege. The system may be false, but as men's wealth or means of life depend upon their supporting it, they must ask no questions that can raise a doubt, read no books, consort with no man

that would present the arguments of the opposite side ; and thus the maxim of the Gentiles is daily verified—

χρυσὸς δὲ κρείσσων μηρίων λόγων βροτοῖς.*

O heavens, what a wreck is here of all honour and justice—of all the old sentiments of loyalty and faith ! The age of chivalry is past, we are told, and does it not seem as if the age of truth had departed with it ? Indeed the phenomena of the moral world at present can surprise no philosopher who traces the modern established systems to their source, for they were framed and set up by vessels of all guile whose spirit would naturally descend to their posterity. Strype and many others can bear witness to the antiquity of the seductive art in conducting attacks against the Catholic religion in England. Hear but the reasoning of the celebrated Burton. “The worst Christians of Italy” says he, “are the Romans, the worst Romans are the priests, the worst priests are the cardinals, and the worst cardinal is the pope, who is generally an epicure, an infidel, a Lucianist.” This, it will now be thought, is over bold, but the representations made of Catholic institutions, and of Catholic men at the present day, though in a more specious language, prove only a greater proficiency in that art which the men of the middle ages have shown they were not skilled to learn. Again, history, with the melancholy comment furnished by contemporary deeds, sufficiently proves that an extremely delicate sense of justice, that nice and exquisite sensibility which characterized the ages of which St. Louis was the type, the model and representative, is not a characteristic of those who follow the banners on which reformed church, or march of reason, is inscribed. What city, or what mortal, nourishing no sentiment in the light of the heart, would revere justice ? This is what Æschylus demands †. He does not ask what city or mortal possessed of useful knowledge, or cultivating science in the depth of the understanding ? Admirable testimony to the truth of our philosophy, which teacheth that it is with the heart man believeth unto justice.

To witness how the modern opinions can falsify the reason and diminish the sense of justice, one need only attend to any of these great legislative proceedings where questions at issue between the modern constitutions or religious

* Medea, 962.

† Eumenid. 522.

establishments, and the followers of the ancient faith, are agitated. If what we continually hear or read, were said and written by others, as Cicero exclaims, if in the name of the people, of the multitude of ignorant citizens, one would endure it with an equal mind ; we might pass on without noticing it ; but when we find it proceeding from senators and nobles who should have honour and justice ever before their eyes, and who certainly are in so many respects in a position favourable to the possession of heroic virtue, one cannot but feel curious to investigate the cause of such a phenomenon, and perhaps the explanation is not difficult. The order on which the Christian society depended has been disturbed during three centuries by the great fact of the usurpation of the spiritual by the temporal power. This monstrous deed, which attacked civilization in its most vital part, has been developed throughout Europe by maxims of egotism, the spirit of monopoly, the abuse of force, and by all means drawn from self-interest in despite of the sentiments of justice. This has introduced confusion into the ideas and morality of the world, and corrupted political men of all nations, making them suppose that the want of principles could be removed by wills, and that parliamentary acts could supply the place of moral laws. When order is violated in its most elevated principle, it can exist no longer any where. One may easily conceive that in youth the reason is vitiated by being taught to combine things essentially irreconcileable, and to consider it as enlightened religion to substitute contradiction in terms for faith. Men may protest against inferences, but they cannot conceal the leading passions of the human mind ; the system to which so many still cling, was originally calculated more to satisfy the ends of Machiavelian politicians, or to feed the vanity and revenge of clever, passionate men at a particular moment, than to satisfy in all ages, the wants of a just and innocent intelligence. Children feel the inconsequence and inconsistency of a thousand things imposed upon them ; they hear contradictory assertions from the same mouths, and they learn to arrange them as they can in their heads. When grown to man's estate.

“ Rumour and the popular voice
They look to more than truth ; and so confirm
Opinion, ere by art or reason taught *.”

* Purg. XXVI.

Hence the intellectual conscience being corrupted, the moral sense is not slow to follow. The strange atrocious doctrines, which are on so many tongues, respecting both private morals and the conduct of nations, can only be explained by the natural disposition of man to justify faults committed by sophistical reasoning, and when through pride he has established himself, in contradiction with moral laws, to seek an extension of his empire by producing around him interests analogous to his own. Things bad begun make strong themselves by ill. It may be truly said that we have even corrupted and falsified languages, in order to diminish the horror of many evils. *Vera rerum vocabula amisimus*, as Cato says in Sallust. Moreover, rationalism, which was in truth the principal heresy of later times, by giving the rein to the passions, and by suppressing supernatural aids, leaves the judgment exposed to every contingency. The humility, and self-control, and chastity of the ages of faith, imparted prodigious perspicuity to the understanding of men. Their rule of deciding debates, as also that of the moderns, may be collected from St. Bernard, “*Amor sicut nec odium, veritatis judicium nescit; vis judicium veritatis audire? Sicut audio sic judico: non sicut odi, non sicut amo, non sicut timeo**.” The latter is the rule of the modern disputants on such topics, when their passions and hereditary prejudices are concerned: they are then like Hotspur, without his provocation,

“Tying their ear to no tongue but their own.”

In public life and political relations, we find in individuals the same deficiency. The most fierce champions of liberty were ready to flatter rich men, and to sell themselves like the Coryphee of that party whose name is held sacred, showing plainly by their deeds that they were only freedom’s hypocrites. The race of rival demagogues did but again appear on the world’s stage, of whom it might be said, in the words of Aristophanes, that they acted like those who fish for eels; for if the pool is calm they take nothing, but when they stir the mud up and down, they catch prizes; so they caught when they excited the city †. Like the two slaves in Plautus, they were sure if let alone to expose their mutual crimes, and thus praise one another in a manner worthy of their genius ‡. Syco-

* *Grad. Humilitatis.* † *Equites.* Asinaria, Act III. 2.

phantas, whether of despots, or of the people, were alike abhorrent from Catholic manners. It was not a professor of the new theology, or a "liberal, exalted statesman," but a father of the church, and a Catholic philosopher, who said, that "they who present panegyrics to the rich ought to be considered not only as flatterers, and men illiberal, but also as impious persons and conspirators, who prevent rich men from discovering the way of safety, by contributing to their pride *." It was not a Bacon, the "reformer of philosophy," but a Spanish bishop of the middle ages, who defined panegyric to be "a licentious and lascivious kind of speech in praise of kings, in which men are flattered with many lies †."

The middle ages beheld holy men who could inspire tyrants and the enemies of the poor with fear and compunction; not men who professed themselves in banqueting to all the rout, who were always held to be dangerous by the wise, but persons who meditated on the divine law; who read much, thought much, who were great observers, and who looked quite through the deeds of men. Such a senator was a true lover of his country and incorruptible. He was, according to the Thucydidean sentence,

φιλόπολίς τε καὶ χρημάτων κρείσσων ‡.

The constancy of such men will stand proof, if tried with such as have more show of worth, of honour, glory, and popular praise, rocks whereon greatest men have ofttest wrecked.

An illustrious French writer, who occasionally speaks with injustice of the manners of the middle ages, says of his countrymen, in a work recently published, that they have now public morals §. Nevertheless, whatever sense may be attached to these words, methinks one must still remain convinced that, if the wisdom of the ages of faith, before morality was so well understood, as the great modern author says, could be heard amidst the uproar and confusion of modern deliberative, or, as they are more justly termed, representative assemblies, it would

* Clemens Alexand. Lib. Quis Dives Salvetur, I.

† Isidori Etymolog. Lib. VII. 7.

‡ II. 60.

§ Chateaubriand, Discours Hist. Tom. IV. 211.

maintain the importance, even in a political point of view, of preserving the old Catholic manners, under whatever system of government might be established. Milton, although no prophet, to have the same facilities for judging as ourselves, nevertheless saw enough to feel strange suspicions. "Can men," he asks, "become all at once the legislators of a nation who have never learnt what law means, what reason, what is right or wrong, lawful or unlawful? Who think that all power consists in violence, dignity in pride and haughtiness *?" Our Catholic legislators did not suppose themselves like Noah, who awoke from his wine, and immediately prophesied. They were frugal, temperate, austere, and mortified men, practising the fasts and abstinence of the holy Catholic church, and often even exceeding what she required. They were not pedants or braggadocios in legislation, offering to prove the justice and honour of their public measures at the point of the sword; they were not sold to the Jews, and estimating the virtue of their measures by the bulletins of an exchange, and the profit of those who haunted it. Consider the Venetian republic and the assembly of its senators, in which not he who had most wealth but who had most virtue was the first. "If you beheld the council," says Benedict Aretino, "you would no longer exclusively admire the Roman senate. There you would see grave and moderate men; there you would observe with what gravity, and decorum, and erudition, a grave question was discussed. You would find among them nothing vain, nothing light, nothing unworthy; and if he who seems the greatest were to betray any insolence, you would see him immediately become the least of all. The public welfare is their only concern, to promote which they labour with intense application. Who could relate all their glorious deeds? who could enumerate all their just, and wise, and eloquent men †?"

William of Poictiers says that, during the time of William the Conqueror, Normandy had in its assemblies, besides the bishops and abbots, men of the laical order, most eminent, who were the light and brilliant ornament of the council. Robert count of Mortain, Robert count

* Second Defence of the People of England.

† *De præstantia virorum sui ævi Dialog. Thesaur. Antiq. Italiæ, IX.*

of Eu, father of Hughes, bishop of Lisieux, Richard count of Evreux, Roger of Beaumont, Roger of Mont-Gomeri, William son of Osbern, and the Viscount Hughes. These men, by their wisdom and ability, preserved their country from dangers*.

In England and France during every reign, there were men of this character, the pride and ornament of history. When they took the charge of public affairs, it was from a love of justice and from charity, not from a regard to the interest of any political party in the state, and still less of their families or of themselves. “The Pythagorean discipline is said to have banished sedition and discord, and all study of parties, not only from among its disciples, but also from all the cities of Italy and Sicily†. What is admired as flowing from philosophy, should not be condemned or passed over in disdain, when it had its origin in the principles of the Catholic religion. “There are some,” says Hugo of St. Victor, “who know how, and can, and wish to command; there are others who know how, and can, but who are unwilling; there are again others who neither know how, nor can, nor are willing. To know how and to be able and willing, is of charity or of pride; to know how and to have the power but to be unwilling, is of humility or of sloth; neither to know how nor to be able but to wish, is of cupidity and folly: neither to know how, nor to be able nor willing, is of discretion and providence‡.” It would not be difficult to determine to which of these divisions we should refer the statesmen of Catholic and perhaps modern times. An absolute horror of ambition characterised the middle ages. Innumerable are the instances which they furnish of men renouncing, and of exercising power solely through the love of justice, and of fulfilling what they owed to God. Nor should we overlook the affecting lamentations of others who recognised the perils of their situation in supreme power. King John of Arragon dying at Barcelona, after receiving all the sacraments and hearing the Passion and the seven psalms, remained silent, and being cold they thought him dead, but suddenly opening his eyes, he cried out, “O the vain thoughts of men! O the misery of those who seek prince-

* Id. 387. † Jamblich. de Pythagoric. Vita, cap. 7.

‡ Hugo S. Vict. de Claustro Animæ, Lib. II. c. 12.

doms, and affect riches and honours! O happy the poor, and their secure and blessed life, who eat their bread in the sweat of their faces, and who live with the labour of their hands? For what hath a kingdom, what have honours and the respect of many profited wretched me? What have so many labours and such dangers of body and soul? O wretched man, who hast learned so late the deceit of the world, and who would certainly have lived a better life if, instead of being a king, he had been a poor cultivator of the ground." His brother Alfonso dying at Naples, had expressed himself nearly in the same words*.

The one house of the Signori della Scala can show a succession of six princes who all evinced by their deeds an absence of ambition. Witness that great Albert, elected after the downfal of the tyrant Eccelino, duke of Verona, by the whole people, "in honour of God and of his blessed mother and all the saints, and for the welfare of the city," as the original instrument states, who governed with such humility and mercy, adorned the city with so many magnificent and religious monuments, cheered and refreshed the long-oppressed people with so many splendid festivities, and died so lamented, that all the citizens spontaneously clothed themselves in black, and suffered their beards to grow during the space of a whole year; who, after governing the state twenty-three years with the utmost glory, charged his sons on his death-bed to bury him without an epitaph in the church of St. Mary the ancient. Witness again his son and successor, Bartholomeo, of most benignant and pacific disposition, the friend rather of the people than of the nobility, devoted to religion, visiting the churches, assisting daily at mass, so charitable that the poor in crowds used to await his rising from table, when all that remained on it used to be distributed among them, and who, after this truly Christian life and a short reign, commanded at his death, that he should have the funeral of a private man; which orders were obeyed, when all the poor of the city followed, weeping and lamenting the loss of their father; to whom succeeded his brother, Alboino, another meek, pacific man, so that his youngest brother, Can Francesco, was associated with him in the government, for the con-

* Lucii Marinæ Siculi de rebus Hispaniæ, Lib. XVIII.

duct of military operations, who was afterwards known as Can Grande, whom Dante praised as the great Lombard who received him in his exile, who also evinced a noble preference of virtue to ambition, for having promised Alboino, on his death bed, that his sons should succeed, as he himself wanted legitimate male issue, immediately on his brother's death, assumed Albert, the eldest of his nephews, as his associate in the government, which act of fidelity endeared him to the people, who knew how he loved his own sons. This Albert showed himself equally remote from ordinary ambition, for on the death of his uncle Can Grande, he might have succeeded alone to the supreme power, since at the last ratification of their government at Milan, before the Emperor Lewis of Bavaria, there had been added an express clause, that when one of the ruling princes died without a son, the other should succeed him without an associate. Nevertheless he chose to follow the custom of his ancestors, and accordingly assumed Mastino, his younger brother, for his colleague in the government, to whom he soon gave up the whole power, retaining nothing for himself but the veneration and love of the people; and when Mastino died, he caused his own son, the second Can Grande, to be proclaimed, who on his father's death, which followed shortly after, furnished the last proof of the virtue which had distinguished his family, by refusing to take anything from the people, but what his father had left him; with whom perished all the greatness of that house, which thenceforth furnished only memorable examples to mankind of divine justice in avenging a brother's murder*.

Let it not be forgotten that during the middle ages, both owing to the general prevalence of Catholic manners, and also to the peculiar organization of society, it was often the most just, the most religious men, who attained to the chief power in the government of human affairs, and to the possession of the greatest influence in the direction of states. What modesty in Andrea Contareno, who would not accept the dignity of doge of Venice, until threatened with exile if he refused? What justice in the doge Michael Maurocenus, who would

* Torelli Saraynæ Hist. et Gesta Veronensium, Lib. II. Thesaur. Antiq. Ital. IX.

have put his own son to death in prison, if not prevented by the senators, for having seduced and betrayed a virgin*?

To show the grandeur and immortal glory of the Venetian republic, Aretino deemed it enough to name one alone of her dukes, Francis Foscaro, a man who for prudence, justice, humanity, and wisdom, might be fearlessly opposed to all antiquity†. What piety, innocence, and justice, marked the whole life of Octavianus Fulgosi⁹, commander of Genoa, who amidst violent civil dissensions, was dear to men of all parties, and who, after resigning his authority, gave himself wholly to religion, becoming so venerable that the holy sovereign pontiffs corresponded with him‡. Again, what legislative and political wisdom and justice, in every page of the old Spanish chronicles, recording the deeds and conversation of their kings? Read the discourse on the death of Alfonso the Magnanimous, seventeenth king of Arragon, to Gabriel of Sorrentum, his familiar friend, or that which he addressed to his son Ferdinand, when the latter was going against the Florentines, in which he said, “Then only will military arts profit you, when you render God propitious to you by piety and deeds of justice§.”

What an example of the same justice on a throne, in that Marquis Adelbert of Lucca, who died in 917, on whose tomb, containing also his wife Berta, in the cathedral of Lucca, you may read these verses in ancient characters:

“ Hic populi leges, saxi sub mole sepulchri,
 Hic jus, paxque jacet, hic patriæ auxilium.
 Hic cubat ala, scutum, dolor, lacrimæque repostæ ;
 Hic oculus cæci, hic pietas viduæ,
 Pes claudi, vestis nudi, solamen egeni,
 Noster Adalbertus Dux pius atque bonus.
 Quam fortis fuerit, neverunt ultima Tilæ ;
 Qua bonitate fuit, dicere lingua nequit.
 In sexto decimo Septembre notante Calendas
 Hic posuit membra a funereo gemitu.

* Italia Sacra, V. 1166.

† De præstant. virorum sui ævi.

‡ Uberti Folietæ clarorum Ligurum Elogia. Antiq. Italiae, Tom. I.

§ Lucii Marinæi Siculi de reb. Hispaniæ, Lib. XI.

Quisque legis tumulum, culparum facta suarum
Ante Deum recita, in precibusque juva *.

The tomb of Winrich von Kniprode at Marienburg, upon which an armed knight is sculptured, is nearly consumed by time, so as hardly to exhibit any letters that are legible to indicate his name, "but," adds Voight, "his virtues have raised him an imperishable monument in the memory of men, for his name can never be forgotten, as long as men shall retain any reverence for what is great and noble. With the piety of a monk, he joined the wisdom of a great legislator and the courage of an heroic warrior. No one ever weighed the sceptre and the sword with such advantage to his country." "Seldom," says John von Müller, "do we find in history the renown of the best of men associated along with that of being the most important and influential. In Winrich we have both †." But though such examples, throughout the whole course of history are rare, they were sufficiently numerous during the middle ages, as to render them unlike all other epochs in the annals of mankind.

To nations preserving the traditions and manners of faith, the Catholic church might have truly applied the words of Minerva in *Æschylus*, and have predicted to them that wondrous and supernatural state of temporal felicity, which consisted not in the possession of a constitution more worthy of renown than that of Sparta, not in an exemption from the disorders and punishment consequent upon sin, but in the establishment and permanence of institutions admirably designed to satisfy the wants and to diminish the sufferings of humanity. "Doing this," she might have said, "you will have a state such as no other race of men possesses."

οὐτ' ἐν Σκύθησιν, οὐτε Πέλοπος ἐν τόποις ‡.

Let us, however, consider this national justice in detail. The political morals of the middle ages were not Machiavellian. Dante represents fraud as more hateful to God than force. The Anglo-Gallican system of non-intervention would have been deemed more odious than any open violence however unjust. Philip of Macedon, it

* Italia Sacra, I. 802.

† Voight Geschichte Preussens, V.

‡ Eumenid. 702.

was said, could deceive and captivate the prudence of the Phocians, the magnanimity of the Thebans, the manly virtue of the Lacedæmonians, the wisdom of Athens ; this was an ability which would have won no honour in the heroic ages of our history. The political science of the middle ages did not indicate a contempt for all sacred obligations. Varro, whom the ancients called a liberal, and whom Cicero styled a man most acute, *et sine ulla dubitatione doctissimus*, in his books treated first on human and afterwards on divine things, for which he assigned this reason, that cities existed before their institutions, so that divine things were instituted by men ; as the painter existed before the picture, and the builder before the house, so did cities before their institutions. That the absurdity of such an opinion was sufficiently clear to men in the middle ages, may be witnessed in the first chapter of the constitution, framed at Genoa on the restoration of its liberty, by Andrew Doria, which begins by setting forth that the future grandeur and happiness of the republic will depend upon the degree of reverence which it evinces for the Christian religion, and then charges in consequence all rulers and persons in authority to protect the clergy and the property of the monastic orders, for the honour and security of the whole state *. John, King of Arragon, said at his death to his son Ferdinand, who was to succeed him, “ For the love of me, I ask and implore you that you will always prefer divine to human things. Let nothing be ever dearer to you than the worship of God, nothing higher in your eyes than virtue, and do nothing without the counsel of just men †.” There was then no kingdom or republic of which God was not considered the supreme Ruler Heinsius, though a disciple of the modern school, and one who admits that the power of no republic or kingdom is sufficiently great, unless there be a greater authority by which it may stand and fall, says that Plato was wise in pronouncing a king to be a human god in political relations ‡. It was one of the counsels of Fenelon to the Duke of Burgundy, in his plan for the

* Thesaurus Antiq. Italiæ, Tom I.

† Lucii Marinæi Siculi, de reb. Hispaniæ, Lib. XVIII.

‡ Orat. XVII.

government of France, to beware of the exorbitant opinions of the parliamentarians; and so little importance does Milton seem to attach to those provisions which are now thought so essential to every free and happy state, that he recommends an unchanging administration. "Although," he says, "it may seem strange at first hearing, by reason that men's minds are possessed with the notion of successive parliaments, I affirm, that the grand or general council, being well chosen, should be perpetual *." To the humble and unpretending statesmen of the middle ages, such an affirmation would not have seemed to argue greater wisdom than his invectives against kings. "There should be a succession of magistrates," says Giles of Colonna, instructing Philip-le-Bel, "and places of dignity should not be always left with the same persons. Both, in order that the justice of many citizens, which can only be tried by placing them in official situations, may be proved, that the idea of responsibility and of returning to private life may prevent persons in power from abusing it, and also that no class of citizens may deem themselves despised from being always excluded, and so become discontented and hostile to the government †." Still, we must distinguish here: the modern societies reckon public men among their best supporters. Public affairs engross much of their time; but the Catholics of the middle ages were like the primitive Christians, of whom Tertullian bears this testimony: "Nobis nulla res magis aliena quam publica ‡." It was not, therefore, with the Catholic monarchies of Europe as with the Greeks at the breaking out of the Peloponnesian war, when, Thucydides says, "every one supposed that the greatest obstacle to the success of public affairs would be his own absence from them §." Let there, however, be no mistake here. The Catholic religion inspired noble sentiments of personal freedom, and created states that were admirably designed for securing it to the subjects of an hereditary sovereign.

* A ready and easy way to establish a free commonwealth,
p. 602.

† De Reginine Prin. Lib. III. p. 1. c. 13.

‡ Apolog. 38.

§ Lib. II. 8.

“ If any one,” say the laws of the Visigoths, “ should permit himself to be sold, in order afterwards to take advantage, and deceive the purchaser, let him not be heard, but he must remain in the servitude which he has chosen—quoniam non est dignus ut liber sit qui se volens subdidit servituti *.” The political maxim of the middle ages was that of Æschylus, “ praise not anarchy or tyranny.”

*Μήτ’ ἄναρκτον βίον,
μήτε δεσποτούμενον
αἰνέσῃς †.*

These governments did not indeed seek to persuade men that they were truly free, because they had written on a sheet of paper the word liberty, and posted it up at all corners. Liberty, in the sense of ages of faith, was not a placard in a street. It was a living power, the protection of the domestic hearth, the guarantee of social institutions, and of individual habits. But, on the other hand, there was no attempt to represent the justice and christianity of a people, as depending on the form of their government, or the merit of their political system; there was no anarchy or confusion of degree. Domination, which enters of necessity into every form of efficient rule, was not considered despotism; for, as Plato says, “ He who has the power to govern, if any good is to come from him, must not ask the consent of those who are to be governed ‡.” The words of St. Anselm, both in a political and moral point of view, were received as truth, when he said, “ Posse peccare non est libertas; nec pars libertatis.” “ I leave you free as to both men,” said Marinus the hermit, in his last words to the citizens of the mountain republic bearing his name, of which, after flying from Dalmatia, during the persecution of Diocletian, he became the founder and legislator §. This was the idea of freedom nourished, and often realized, in Catholic states. The Catholic spirit in general tended to ennable infinitely the political character of man; for, as St. Augustin says, “ pride tends to degrade and humiliate man by subjecting him to an equal, but pious humility makes him subject to a superior; for there is nothing

* Legis Wisigothorum, Lib. V. tit. IV. 10.

† Eumenid, 526. ‡ De Repub. VI.

§ Italia Sacra, tom. II. 844.

superior to God, and therefore humility exalts man which subjects him to God *." Such were the Catholic notions of independence; but the modern progress was then unknown, according to which, at first, God and justice are taken from the minds of men, and then the legitimate prince is taken from the state, to make room for an odious and ignoble despotism, for wickedness never ceases where it begins, but, as Pythagoras said, it is infinite, always encroaching and gliding on. How much did the Catholic doctrine and the doctrine of the reformers differ? the former taught men to honour the king, to obey governors.

"As against the person of the prince," say the laws of the Visigoths, "we forbid any one to practise violence, so do we prohibit any one to place on him a brand of crime, or to apply to him words of malediction; for the authority of sacred scripture commands us to receive no opprobrious charge against our neighbour, and therefore, he who calumniates or speaks evil of the prince, is guilty; so that, whoever accuses or calumniates the prince, instead of providing measures for having him humbly and secretly admonished of his life, and who shall presume, proudly and contumaciously, to insult his name, whether he be noble, priest, or laic, shall, on conviction, forfeit the half of his goods †." "Not to wish to obey kings or laws," says Giles of Colonna, "is, according to ancient philosophers, and the saying of Homer, to be rather beasts than men, rather slaves than free." Such were the words of believers in the middle ages, and so deeply did they take root, that the sentiment of loyalty became universal, and associated in the minds of the people with every thing generous and manly. "To be convicted of rebellion against my prince," says Tasso, "would have involved me in a state of exile, not alone from Ferrara or Naples, but from the whole world. Excluded I should be from all friendship, and conversation, and knowledge, and comfort, from all grace, and in every place and time equally scorned and abominated: which punishment is so grievous, that if it were without hope, death, beyond all doubt, would not appear much greater; and, perchance, to a man brave and magnani-

* De Civ. Dei. Lib. XIV. 13.

† Legis Wisigothorum, Lib. II. VIII.

mous, such as I recognize myself not to be, it would be esteemed a much minor one *.” This was in conformity with the sentiments and manners of just men in all former times.

Socrates reminded his friend, who entreated him to fly from prison, and so escape the unjust persecutions of the government of his country, that wherever he went, if to an honourable people he would be regarded with just suspicion and aversion. If he were to seek an asylum at Thebes or at Megara, which are virtuous states, he would appear there as an enemy. As many as take an interest in the welfare of their countrymen would look upon him as a destroyer of the laws of his own country, and one whose escape and flight justified the charges that had been brought against him, of his being a corrupter of youth, for they would argue that whoever does his best to destroy the laws by endeavouring to prevent their execution, must necessarily be a corrupter of the young and of the unwise. If he were to fly to a country of wicked men and of evil government, what advantage would he derive from life †? It was the same in the time of St. Ambrose. Witness the words of the holy bishop to those who prepared to fly on the invasion of the Barbarians. “ Let us suppose,” he says, “ that you have courage to endure the injuries of the journey. Tell me what liberty of life will you be able to enjoy among foreigners, when the moment you begin to speak it will be objected to you. ‘ Whence comes this exile? Whence is this fugitive? He wishes to oppress our state as he has injured his own! ’ Trust me, you are about to hear in foreign lands the same language which you have often used to others in your own †.” I am not ignorant of the union of nations, which christianity gradually effected, nor of the heroic and magnanimous deeds of mercy which were its fruit. Still it is curious to contrast this reasoning with the language of the sophists of our time, who regard all persons exiled, though for the greatest outrages against the institutions of their country, as men to be received with open arms, with triumph, and public applause, and who consider such a reception

* Discorso sopra vari accidenti della sua vita scritto a Scipion Gonzaga.

† Plat. Crito.

‡ S. Ambros. Serm. LXXXV.

to be the greatest proof of a nation's advance in civilization. To the agents of the religious revolution of the sixteenth century must the first avowal of such sentiments be traced. Although it may not shame their descendants to read a lecture of their recorded offences, we find amongst them one heinous article, containing the lawless deposing of a king, and cracking the strong warrant of an oath, marked with a blot, damned in the book of heaven. They taught the people to oppress, if it had been oppressed, and to invade the republic in which it had served. So that at length, to be convicted of rebellion against a prince became a passport, which entitled the bearer to be received with the honours due to just men in every nation, in which the modern philosopher could boast of disciples. In this respect, indeed, the first founders of the school left little for those who came after them to bring to perfection.

"Princes," says Calvin, "deprive themselves of all power when they oppose God: (by which he meant the new doctrines;) and it is better in such cases to spit in their faces than to obey them," which irreverence yet he never learned from the example of any apostle. When the boors of Germany rose in rebellion, Luther wrote to censure them, but in such a manner as to inflame them more than ever. "Know, Lords," says he to the German princes, "that God has so ordained, that they neither can, nor ought, to be subject to you." Knox would wish there were public rewards appointed for such assassins and murderers of tyrants, which there are for such as kill wolves*. In a degree of greater or less fanaticism, the same spirit has distinguished the morality of their descendants to our time, for without appealing to the avowed doctrine of Sismondi, a later chief, their recent trophies, won with the tears and blood of Catholic nations, sufficiently demonstrate that they would not have esteemed Tiberius Gracchus to have been happier than his son, the former having studied to preserve the republic, the latter to overthrow it; and, perhaps, it would not be difficult, from marking the course and issue of their measures, to throw some light upon that passage in which Plato affirms, that the unjust man is more prosperous, more powerful, more liberal, and

* Jerusalem and Babel.

more commanding than the just—οὕτως ἴσχυρότερον καὶ ἔλευθεριώτερον καὶ δεσποτικώτερον ἀδικία δικαιοσύνης ἐστίν, ἵκανῶς γιγνομένη *. I make no mention of some modern principles of political economy, which strike at the roots of the morality of the Catholic state, because in the judgment of all just men they should be put down, as Cicero says, not by any philosopher, but by a censor : “ non est enim vitium in oratione solum, sed etiam in moribus.” In general, we may remark, that in the inferior authors as well as actors of the middle and early ages, the foundation is always sound and incontrovertible, though they sometimes raise upon it, according to their fancy or habits, structures which seem at least to us wild and extravagant. With the moderns, on the contrary, it is the foundation which is unsound and untenable, though by the force of nature, and the arts of a specious civilization, they may be able to form systems that have a semblance of propriety and worth. But leaving the subject of legislative and political justice, we are told to look around us in the modern society, and to observe what a progress general morality has made, and how few men can be found who, in their respective stations, are not worthy and honourable. I believe it may seem so—nothing is more probable : “ nisi enim ex comparatione virtutum,” as St. Jerome says, “ vitium non ostenditur†:” but out of the pale of Catholicism we have only natural virtues, or else an exaggerated and irregular imitation of higher—the spirit of the duties exercised by the confraternities of the middle age being absolutely unknown ; so that, although the Catholic discipline, in the estimation of the moderns, who are said to understand morality so well, was illiberal and constrained, the church continues to sing the words of David, “ narraverunt mihi iniqui fabulationes, sed non ut lex tua.” The French sophists of our time may claim Callicles as having been of their party, for in speaking to Socrates on one occasion, he adopts all their favourite opinions, and even uses their very words. “ How facetious you are,” he says, “ O Socrates, to call stupid men temperate. I affirm boldly, that whoever knows how to live well ought to give the rein to his desires, and not to curb them, and to give them whatever they demand ; and it is because many are

* De Repub. Lib. I.

† Hom. Lib. I. com. in 9 Matt.

unable to do this that they calumniate those who act thus, and call them intemperate ; and thus they enslave men of the best natures, and praise temperance and justice, through their own want of manliness. But, O Socrates, the truth is, that luxury, intemperance, and liberty, when there are means, give power and happiness, and these specious inventions, contrary to nature, are the ravings of men, only to be despised *.”

In all the minute details of life one can perceive the same contrast. The colloquial language of the people in Catholic countries, was not gross like that of Shakspeare’s “ liberal shepherds †,” as local histories and the details of popular festivities in the middle ages can bear witness. During the extravagant feast of the Loup-vert which was celebrated every year by the peasants of Jumieges, it was expressly enacted that at the supper if any one should utter an immodest word he was to pay a fine ‡. The laws of the Visigoths were so contrary to the modern ideas of a prudent police, that according to them all who furnished means to transgress the law of God were to be punished with three hundred lashes, and then to be banished the city §. Such a measure would not be in harmony with the state of modern society, where after all the useful knowledge furnished, men who “ take life’s rule from passion, craved for passion’s sake,” are more intemperate in their blood than those pampered animals that rage in savage sensuality ! St. Clemens Alexandrinus speaks of persons enslaved by pleasure, wishing to disbelieve, who laugh at truths worthy of all veneration, and introduce barbarism into education ||. Might not one suppose on reading these words that the Christian father, with prophetic eye, had seen the disciples of the modern school who, as travellers, artists, speculators and liberators, are now circulating like a secret and mortal venom through all the veins of the political state of Europe ? under whose cursed tread every thing innocent and holy withers !—every thing vile and deadly springs up as if called into being by a magician’s wand, wherever they rest ? The stones of the sanctuary are dispersed ; the

* Plato Gorgias.

† Hamlet, IV. 7.

‡ Deshayes’ Hist. de l’Abbaye de Jumieges, 261.

§ Legis Wisigothorum, Lib. III. tit. IV. 3.

|| Stromat. Lib. I. c. 3.

corruption of cities opens its tent in the desert. O, bitter and humiliating reflection, to think that we should have lived to see a swarm like this taking possession of those Catholic heroic states which had resisted and rejected so long the prolific seeds To think that such a race, legitimate offspring of the reform preachers by whom they are strengthened in their own esteem, should now be armed by authority, and sent as to a banquet to fight against the churches, gulled and spurred on by the usurers of the two cities which thrive by the blood of all the truly great and all the innocent, careless how many wretches die, provided their speculations may not fail! But so it is, and the just reduced to silence are only looking around in vain for another Theseus to deliver humanity from creatures like the centaurs of old, that seem half man and half beast! One point at all events is fixed under all phases of the modern civilization, for it forms disciples of whom we may affirm with truth that they are men of no angelic feeling. Their standard is avowedly sensual, only a modified naturalism. Many of their classic productions are even obnoxious to the censure passed by Cicero upon those philosophers who speak of limiting concupiscence, "An potest cupiditas finiri?" he indignantly demands. "Tollenda est atque extrahenda radicitus. Qualis ista philosophia est, quæ non interitum adferat pravitati, sed sit contenta mediocritate vitiorum*?" We read of our Saviour, when he was in the wilderness, that the devil left him, and behold, angels came and ministered unto him. "A great change," observes a modern writer, "in a little time." Such is the case of every solitary soul. A musing mind will not stand neuter a minute, but presently side with legions of good or bad thoughts, and what is true in the case of an individual mind, is no less so with regard to society at large. The spiritual combat so familiar to ages of faith, has been superseded in the imagination by a temporary calm, treacherous and ominous indeed, but most profound. The man who is now designated as possessed of enlightened views and of sound morality, when he contemplates himself, like him of whom we read in the Gospel on returning home, findeth his house swept and garnished, for through neglect of conscience and attention to vain

* De Finibus, II. 9.

superfluous and extrinsic things, he sees nothing defective there. While Luther was in his cloister, he suffered internal agitation and diverse temptations ; when he gave the rein to his passions and became an apostate, he felt them no more. The Catholic philosophy taught that there were domestic enemies against which all Christians were to resist and to contend unceasingly. In breasts to which the ancient discipline is a stranger, these are unknown. “I am not surprised,” says Bossuet, “if living as these men live they do not feel the eternal war of concupiscence. When you swim with the stream of a river, nothing is more gentle, but when you turn against it you will discover the rapidity of its motion. So it is with those who never try to rise above nature, or to begin the interior life. They feel not the resistance of concupiscence ; they are borne along with it, they proceed at an equal pace, and therefore its impetuosity is imperceptible to them.” You have the same remark conveyed in the old verses of Glaber Rodulphus :

“ Hoc habet infelix peccandi consuetudo,
Quod plus quis peccat, minus hic peccare pavescat,
Quique minus peccat, magis hic peccare timescat.”

Witness the experience of a St. Paul, whose affections are with Jesus Christ. Who would have supposed in a soul raised to the intelligence of the secret words which it is not lawful for a man to utter, that the war of the inclinations of sense should be still in action ? But the apostle himself speaks of it. He descends from the chaste and lofty visions of the third heaven to show himself in the arena of carnal combatants ! How came the apostles, who had left every thing, to exclaim, who then can be saved ? “ Because,” replies Clemens Alexandrinus, “ they discerned the depth of the obscure parabolic words, and they were discouraged at the thought of the passions which they had not thoroughly given up, for salvation is of the pure and unimpassioned soul *.” “ If any one contentious should ask, then,” he continues, “ how is it possible for the weak flesh to resist these powers, let him know that trusting in our omnipotent conqueror the Lord, we wage war against the princes of darkness and death †.” The spiritual combat and the

* Lib. Quis Dives Salvetur, I.

† Stromat. Lib. IV. c. 7.

personification of the evil principle, form the grand features in the pschylogical history of the middle ages. The belief had its origin in the sacred Scriptures, and in the personal experience and observation of thoughtful and profound minds. The grotesque forms attached to the idea of the dæmon, may perhaps, as Michelet suggests, be traced to the lingering traditions of the conquered religions of the Fins and Scandinavians, though the bestial character comprised in it as exhibited in the visions of Dante, conformable to the general opinion of the middle ages, cannot admit of that explanation, for it has, beyond all doubt, its foundation in the secret realities of nature.

The spiritual victory over the material and immaterial evil in the mind of Catholics, was the highest glory that could be attained by man. The state of grace was a paradise in which was beheld the river of living water, resplendent as chrystral, proceeding from the seat of God and of the Lamb ; while on the other hand, that of mortal sin was the gloomy region filled with demoniac forms and torments multitudinous. In the poem of the Martyrs, where Eudoxe and Velleda yield to the dæmon, “hell gives the signal of this fatal marriage : the spirits of darkness howl in the abyss—the chaste spouses of the patriarchs turn away their faces, and the protecting angel, veiling himself with his wings, mounts again to heaven.” The modern philosophy has pronounced all this to be characteristic of a false and fanciful system of morality. The dæmon disappears from all action of human life, or instead of the dark cherub, the subtle and bestial fiend, he is represented as in Goethe, interesting and sentimental ; or as in Milton, he excites pity and admiration, being synonymous with religion conquered, or as in Klopstock, he is shown repentant and the most interesting personage of the poem. As the principle of individuality in the will opposed to the designs of the Creator, he is wholly excluded, as is also the whole belief in the inherent evil which is of concupiscence. Rationalism, in which so many religious systems began and terminated, understands the mysteries of life in a different sense : it makes the path smooth by pronouncing the contest to be vain, and victory impossible, and so converts man from being a brother in arms of the angels, to become a sensual and unresisting, and unhallowed creature of the earth. No,

among men interiorly philosophic, there can be no question here. The history of the pseudo-reform in regard to its influence on morals or metaphysics, on political science, or on domestic action, may be comprised in two lines. "Homo cum in honore esset non intellexit, comparatus est jumentis insipientibus et similis factus est illis *."

Here, in regard to those who have resisted this revolution, a painful and an alarming reflection suggests itself. In Catholic states, however disorganized, one may live amidst men of holy simplicity, and as it were, of the old Homeric type transfigured on the mount, resembling those of whom one reads in ancient hallowed books, men of whom nearly every action and word might furnish fresh matter for some new sweet inspiring page, enough to win all hearts to a love of innocence and truth. One may imagine that one's lot has been cast in the happiest and even most romantic age of the world, in the same manner as when one visits the beautiful countries of the south, one can suppose oneself placed in some of those delicious landscapes which the pencil of Claude Lorraine has made so familiar to the fancy; whereas if one pass into countries where the influence of faith and of all the old historic and domestic associations connected with it is limited to a very few, every thing changes, as when you turn your eyes from one of these paintings to let them wander over a vulgar and ignoble scene, and feel the heart sink on being drawn back to reality. Now it is difficult to follow the Catholic type of moral beauty in a country where it has been supplanted by another; for besides that in such lands there is sure to be far greater external temptation, the force of that false opinion which prevails, must, like those calumnies of men from which the Psalmist prayed to be delivered, prevent many in their course, and lead many from the narrow but tranquil way. You inhale the spirit of the multitude around you. It encompasses you as an atmosphere, and enters into your very soul. Cicero speaking of the obstacles opposed to the virtue of Roman commanders in the distant provinces of Asia, remarks, "that it is difficult for them to think of nothing but virtue, and that those also who are more moderate, possessing shame and

* Ps. xlviij.

temperance, are nevertheless thought to be so by no one on account of the multitude of the greedy *.” So it may be in relation to Catholic manners: where no one understands their type, where no one can recognize it or appreciate it, those few who attempt to follow it are sure to be accused of being unlike the good and fair, of being illiberal and fond of singularity, the force of which misrepresentations is certainly not calculated to smooth the ascent or facilitate the path which must be trod by those who hunger and thirst after living justice. But to return to what concerns the present argument. Another remark suggested by viewing the two disciplines in contrast, must be that even independent of what is required by the supernatural principles of the Catholic morality, the language of the moderns is more soft and delicate than the force and gravity of virtue would sanction. Who could doubt from which of the two camps had come that Geoffroy Ville Hardouin, the historian, offering the reality of that chivalry of which we have so many ideal portraits—a warrior impelled only by a sense of the most sacred duty, a wise counsellor, full of prudence, faith, and justice, firm and as unbending as the iron armour which cased his limbs? or what difficulty in determining to what senate those grave patricians belonged who are described by the historians of Venice? Whereas, on the other hand, how prepared is every one to hear the objections of the heretics advanced by those characters which Shakspeare’s pen describes, in whom manhood is melted into mincing phrases and gests of fashion? how naturally do they seem to come from a man who is in all the world’s new fashion planted, that hath a mint of phrases in his brain, and whom the music of his own vain tongue doth ravish like enchanting harmony; who, like Paris, is fair perhaps in form and comely,

ἀλλ’ οὐκ ἔστι βίη φρεσὶν οὐδέ τις ἀλκή †.

Now, if we look to the picture on the opposite side, we are not reduced to defend the justice and morality of Catholics on the ground taken by those German writers who say that there are different standards, different types as it were of virtue in different ages, and all equally good. “There is a different measure,” says Voight,

* Pro lege Manilia, 22.

† Il. III. 45.

"for every age, for every nation, for every individual. As all blossoms and plants are not the same, so may humanity bear different forms of good, and what would be hateful in us might have been virtuous in our ancestors *." To such reasoning I would only reply in the words of Cicero, "This is truly a correction and emendation of the ancient philosophy which can have no admittance within the city, the forum, or the courts."

There is no vice so simple, but assumes some mark of virtue on its outward parts. "Quale autem beneficium est," says Cicero to Antony, "quod te abstinueris nefario scelere †?" The moderns seem to think that the overt act is required to constitute a transgression of the law of God, and they would hold Cicero's language where he speaks of the size and gladiatorial strength of Antony having added to the shame of his drunkenness, as proving that he might have drank so much without having been drunk ‡. The heroic, just, and devout men of the middle ages were not like the Camilluses and Themistocles of heathen, and the Bacons and Sidneys of modern times, leaving an imperishable fame as the first men of their age and the ornaments of their country, though convicted of such offences that their warmest eulogizers can only say of them what Niebuhr observes of Camillus: "In such a man the nation ought to have shown indulgence even to deplorable faults §." Tacitus speaking of Agricola, says "that it would be an insult to the virtues of such a man to make mention of his integrity and abstinence," but no observant or judicious reader would quarrel with a writer of modern biography for having condescended to enter upon such details respecting the men whom he undertook to describe. Indeed, the followers of the reformed discipline spoke of their heroes as the ancients did of Cato, of whom Cæsar said, that when discovered drunk, those who beheld him seemed rather detected by Cato than Cato was by them; which makes Pliny observe in the style of Burnet, "Potuitne plus auctoritatis tribui Catoni quam si ebrius quoque tam venerabilis erat ||?" In general their language respecting their Franc von Sickingens, was like that of Cassius,

* Geschichte Preussens, V. 394.

† Philip. II.

‡ Philip. II.

§ Hist. of Rome, II. 501.

|| Epist, Lib. III. 12.

"in such a time as this it is not meet that every nice offence should bear its comment." Accordingly, Elizabeth, that daughter of blood, who made such slaughter of the saints, and such a jest of humanity, murdering her own guest, was saluted as an immaculate heroine, and enshrined in the hearts of all who followed the new banners, which made honourable all who followed them.

Gustavus Adolphus, who pillaged and desecrated all the churches of Germany, and ravaged ten great provinces in honour of Luther, is a name never uttered in countries where the modern discipline is established, without exultation and defiance. Who more dear and venerable in the estimation of his party than the famous admiral Coligny, who was strongly suspected of having armed the hand of Poltrot to assassinate that noble hero the duke of Guise, and who admitted that for five or six months he had heard of such a plan, and that "he had strongly contested the point with them?" who confessed that Poltrot had said to him, how easy it would be to kill the duke, but that sooth he had never "insisted upon his doing so:" who admitted that he had given Poltrot a horse; that when Poltrot had disclosed his idea he had replied nothing "to say whether it was well or ill done," and who declares in a letter to the queen that the death of the duke was the greatest good that could happen to the kingdom, to the church of God, and personally to the king and to all the house of Coligny *." The moderns again seem to regard indulgence in any one sin as a warrant of greater virtue in other respects, as passionate persons are said to be generous. But the Catholic moral writers hold a different doctrine, and sooth, "What boots it at one gate to make defence, and at another to let in the foe effeminately vanquished?" Even the Gentile sage showed that every evil was to be fled from by virtue and not by the contrary evil, "as some think," he says, "who correct bashfulness by insolence, rusticity by profaneness, cowardice and effeminacy by a tone of boldness and audacity, and superstition by atheism †."

The just men of Catholic times, even when described

* St. Victor, Tableau de Paris, Tom. III. 113.

† Plutarch.

by writers of the modern school, are not represented as persons in whom deplorable faults must be forgiven in consideration of their general merits, and as being venerable even when detected in their sins. Those ancient spirits would marvel at seeing such virtue crowned even on earth. An historian knows well that if there hath been men that showed in faithful mirror the celestial justice, these without veil reflected it. Behold that Hermann von Salza, master of the Teutonic order, of whom we have so often spoken, and hear the testimony borne to his character by Voigt, the historian of Prussia. "Admirable he was in peace and war, attached to freedom, to law, and order, wise in all his counsels, pure from passion, selfishness, and love of dominion, superior to all the suggestions of pride, removed from error of every kind, detached from the world in heart as well as in vow! Humility and obedience marked every action of his life ; he was always ready to devote himself for the sake of the poor, the sick, and the unprotected. As a knight and master he was of surpassing virtue, intent always upon what tended to promote the propagation of the faith, the honour of the church and the good of mankind. In his relations with the emperor and the pope he was equally tried and found eminent as one of the noblest and most just of men, eminent in the magnanimity of his soul, in the purity of his life, in the humility of his manners, in the warmth of his devotion. Not one word of censure can history pronounce against him, whether as a knight, a statesman, a Christian, or a man. So he was beloved by his contemporaries, being the admiration of high and low, the ornament of his order, and the object of praise to all succeeding ages *." By the degree of astonishment which we should experience were we to find, after reading this, that his countrymen had to show indulgence to some deplorable faults in his character, or to throw a veil over the actions of his private life, we can estimate the distance between a just man of the Catholic type, and a hero of the school which has been opposed to it as teaching a sounder and more effective morality.

In sacred dyptiques at least posterity will not discover the names of many of these latter transmitted with

* Voigt Geschichte Preussens, II. 365.

honour. The impression upon the mind of one familiar with antiquity, with respect to the character of the majority of men, in the times which succeeded to the ages of faith, is not assuredly that they were of a different religion, or of a more spiritual philosophy from that of the Gentiles, or that they understood morality better than the Catholics of the middle ages, but that they had thrown off all religion, and all moral restraints, excepting such as were imposed by civil laws, by the motives of personal interest, and of temporal expediency. A classical student, who turns his view from the pages which contain the old histories of the heathen world, and its moral views, to the manners of the men who move around him, will be startled by no prodigious contrast, by no novelty. He sees evidence, indeed, that they have forsaken the temples of the gods, but where does he find indication that they have fled to the cross? The persons who surround him are his old acquaintances, described in Euripides and Sallust, in Athenæus perhaps, and Suetonius. "They can fancy themselves," as Heinsius observed, "living in Greece in ancient times, fighting with Homer, though even that may be questioned, rusticating with Hesiod, loving with Anacreon, weeping with Euripides, and with Pindar rising to a poetic heaven *." In the Gentile authors one is often struck with sudden amazement at the breaking forth of expressions which indicate how immeasurable is the distance between the sentiments of human morality and those of the Christian law. The Ion of Euripides presents many examples of this kind, as in the lines

————— ὅταν δὲ πολεμίους δρᾶσαι κακῶς
θέλγ τις, οὐδεὶς ἐμποδὼν κεῖται νόμος †.

But what is most remarkable, is the conduct of Ion; for after being prepared to consider him almost as one of our Christian acolythes, how very startling is the manner in which he expresses himself, on discovering the plot against his life. This gentle and holy youth is now full of revenge, and blasphemous imprecations

* Heinsius Orat. XIX.

† 1060.

against the very gods whom he had before adored. With rapture he cries out to Creusa:

ἀλλ' οὕτε βωμὸς, οὐτ' Ἀπόλλωνος δόμος,
σώσει σ' *.

Then he condemns heaven, and pretends to be wiser and juster:

φεῦ!
δεινόν γε, Θυητοῖς τοὺς νόμους ὡς οὐ καλῶς
ἔθηκεν ὁ Θεὸς, οὐδὲ ἀπὸ γνώμης σοφῆς.
Τοὺς μὲν γάρ ἀδίκους βωμὸν οὐχ ἴζειν ἔχοντα,
ἀλλ' ἐξελαύνειν †.

And when the priestess remonstrates with him, he justifies his own projects of having complete satisfaction ; demanding

Οὐ χρή με τοὺς κτείνοντας ἀνταπολλύναι ‡;

The minister of heaven can give him no higher law. She speaks of purity ; and he replies, every one is pure who kills his enemy : concluding with an insolent declaration, that he has been deceived by the god, that he disdains his revelations ; and adds, that if on discovering his real mother, she should prove to be some slave, it would be much better for him never to have heard of her. And this is the sacerdotal youth who appeared at first all innocence, and gentleness, and sanctity ! Assuredly, most striking are such passages, and most convincing is the evidence which they furnish, as to the fact of there being on earth a new created man. But of this evidence the Gentile authors are not the only source, for in the writings of the moderns we are liable to meet with similar interruptions to the current of a discourse which had professed to spring from the supernatural fountain of divine faith. Read that letter from Sir Philip Sidney to Molineux, his father's secretary, declaring that he suspects him of having communicated to other persons the letters which he had intended for his father's ear alone, and concluding with these words : “ I assure you before God, that if ever I know you do so much as read any letter I write to my father without his commandment or

my consent, I will thrust my dagger into you. And trust to it, for I speak it in earnest ; in the mean time, farewell." The author to whom we are indebted for a beautiful edition of Sir Philip Sidney's works, acknowledges that this epistle is sadly deficient in point of discretion and temper ; "but," he adds, "as shewing the intensity of his filial regard, it must lead to our increased love and respect for the amiable qualities of his heart." That Sir Philip Sidney possessed the highest virtue of a natural order, and that his character corresponded with the fairest ideal of the discipline to which he was attached, may be very true, but assuredly, to one familiar with the tradition of Catholic manners, there was somewhat to astonish in such a letter, coming from a man who separated himself from the ancient society, on the alleged ground of its not being according to Scripture and the Evangelic law. Now mark a contrast in regard to the duties of a particular state. We have often read of the retreats for prayer and spiritual meditation, practised at regular intervals by Catholic bishops, who had been obliged to take a part in civil affairs for the interest of kings and people ; but what is the provision made by that illustrious historian, and model of the modern discipline, the bishop Burnet, when placed in similar circumstances ? "Upon this," he says, "I went into a closer retirement, and to keep my mind from running after news and affairs, I set myself to the study of philosophy and algebra;" expedient worthy, no doubt, of an Aristotle or an Archimedes, but rather singular when selected by one who professed to be a successor of the Apostles, and a restorer of Scripture, and a sound morality to the Church. It is painful to be obliged to include the glorious name of Milton in the list of those whose works can supply contrasts of this extraordinary and afflicting nature ? How does he speak, albeit with the name of God, and the church, and reformation, ever on his tongue ? Read his defences of the people of England. With what fury and virulence does he attack his opponents : with what inconceivable frivolity does he describe the beauty of his person, setting forth among his other bodily accomplishments, his skill and practice in handling his sword. "Armed," saith he, "with this weapon, as I commonly was, I thought myself a match for any man, though far my superior in strength, and

secure from any insult which one man could offer to another. At this day I have the same spirit ; my eyes only are not the same *." Let nature have her due praise, as she hath always her reward. All this may be amiable and admirable ; but does it indicate a better understanding of morals in the Christian sense, for that is the present question, or is it consistent with the character of religious reformers, for that again is a question that forcibly suggests itself ? Is it not calculated to awaken many suspicions, and to justify the inference, that the real cause of opposition to the Catholic church was something very different from a true progress in moral philosophy, and a light infused by the author of the Holy Scriptures ? But without going back to past times, is it not evident that the moral views of the very men who affirm that morality is now better understood than in the middle ages, are obnoxious to the charge of inconsistency ? A Catholic, on reading the poem of Marmion, must be startled when he hears Constance de Beverley, for whom preceding verses had awakened a lively interest, suddenly exclaiming :

" But did my fate and wish agree
Ne'er had been read, in story old,
Of maiden true betray'd for gold,
That loved or was avenged like me †."

Another of these sudden inconsistent transitions occurs in the Lady of the Lake, where the death words of Blanche to Fitz-James are given, invoking him by his knighthood's honoured sign, and for his life's sake, which she had preserved, to avenge her. The hour of death has restored her reason ; you expect to hear the last sighs and wishes of a Christian soul. And what are the words—

" Be thy heart bold, thy weapon strong,
And wreak poor Blanche of Devon's wrong !"

The heroic spirit which we have noticed as characteristic of the Catholic justice, might again be viewed here in opposition to the kind of shop-counter morality, which

* Second Defence of the People of England.

† Marmion, II.

is so predominant in the modern literature, philosophy, and manners. This kind undoubtedly was not so well understood in the middle ages, by those at least with whom history is concerned ; for, in fact, men were often really deficient in respect to it, so as even to feel a foolish pride in saying with Armado, “ I am ill at reckoning ; it fitteth the spirit of a tapster.” Here a grand reform was made by the disciples of the new discipline, whose perfect understanding, within this sphere, may be collected from a few examples. Paulus, a professor of the new theology, objects to the miracle of our Lord respecting the tribute money, by observing, that “ at Caper-naum, where he had friends, a miracle for about a dollar would certainly have been superfluous.” When Luther would express his horror of the sentiments of Erasmus, he can find no stronger terms to indicate it than by saying, that he would not for 10,000 florins be in his place. Burnet, too, in enumerating the excellent virtues of one renowned hero of his party, mentions that he would never attempt to pass off bad money, which he knew to be such. All the enlightened men, who follow these leaders, would resent as an injury the intimation that they had no regard for very elevated sentiments ; but, the fact is, that when left to themselves, and observed off their guard, in the assembly of their peers, in their political writings as well as in the common occasions of life, they never, by any hazard, allude to the profession or exercise of heroic virtue, unless in the way of ridicule or of objection. They declare that it is beyond all power of human credulity to believe, that public men would support or oppose a state measure unless they received an equivalent for their doing so. They proclaim, that the only safeguard for the justice of men is publicity, and that no one can be trusted whose actions are not constantly submitted to the scrutiny of the world. Expediency is their avowed and exclusive motive, even when they do an eminent act of justice ; and what can be expected from them when they are required to perform an act of sacrifice ? They ascribe no value to any thing but what is attached to the material and temporal order. As De Haller says of the revolutionary sophists, who are opposed to all authority, spiritual and temporal, extending their false ideas to every thing, they distort and paralyze the best mea-

sures ; they have always objections to advance against what is good, and excuses ready for evil. To their eyes the moment for the first is never come ; but there is always urgent necessity for the latter. In short, however unwilling one may be to arrive at a conclusion which seems like accusing a set of men in mass, there is no other inference possible, after an attentive observation of what has occurred in later times, but that nothing carries with it, in the estimation of those who are true disciples of the modern discipline, the character of solidity, of practical, sober, enlightened, and dispassionate wisdom, excepting what is in its last terms, a sordid and despicable life, without genius, and without virtue.

The very confessions, too, of the men who accomplished and favoured the revolution of the sixteenth century, and who stood high in the estimation of its admirers, are worthy of being remarked. The bitter hate which pervaded the mind of Calvin, is ascribed by some to the sufferings of his youth, when he lived as preceptor in a proud family, which made him feel his inferiority. After all my efforts," he says, " I cannot tame my own ferocity." Sir Philip Sidney, indeed, takes an opportunity most pointedly to deny the charge brought against himself, that he was wholly possessed by egotism and bubbling pride ; but he pleads guilty of a headlong ambition, that made him ' oft his best friends overpass *.' " "I perceive my soul," says Fuller, " deeply guilty of envy. By my good will, I would have none prophesy but mine own Moses. I had rather the Lord's work were undone, than done better by another than by myself †." These men, who accused the Catholic society of the middle ages of having been left in ignorance of the Bible, gave no proof of having rendered their own manners, or those of the disciples who followed them, conformable to its spirit. The names and phrases of the Old Testament were indeed ever on their tongue ; but did they learn from it to evince the meekness of Moses, the simplicity of Joseph, the gentleness of David, the fervour of Elias, the abstinence of Daniel, the chastity of Samuel ? It might be doubted, whether amidst the general advance, as they supposed, of knowledge, when even the Bible, as Novalis suggests, was to

* The life of S. P. Sidney.

† Thoughts XII.

be considered as progressive, they had learned to understand so much as to know with what virtues these names of holy writ ought to be associated ; though that knowledge would have been more satisfactory proof of morality being well understood, than the writing up “Bethel” and “Zion” over their halls of assembly, and calling their children Sidrach, Misach, and Abdenago. They adopted a different division of the decalogue, although they might have known that St. Clemens of Alexandria, so profoundly versed in ancient erudition, when philosophizing upon the two tables, and showing their mystic principle, divides them as did the Catholic church, in their days * ; but the question was still urgent, were they the first to enable men to fulfil it in spirit and in justice ? Truly it is only one who has followed the history of the religious innovators, and marked their manners from their first appearance as a society, that can understand the Apostle, who, after describing men “lovers of themselves, greedy, proud, blasphemous, disobedient to parents, ungrateful, wicked, without affection, without peace, unchaste, cruel, without benignity, betrayers, lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God,” adds—“habentes speciem quidem pietatis †.” As for those more avowedly in alliance with the world, their history is not more inviting. “The monster of modern sophistry,” says the poet Gilbert, “has not a ferocious air, and the name of virtue is always on its tongue ; but what age was ever more fertile in vice, more sterile in noble deeds, than this which is termed the age of reason, when men are taught by moral authors, that for the philosopher there is no God † ?” No. These pretensions are vain, and the men who produce them have given no proof of having reformed or perfected either the philosophy or the practice of morals. The ancient Christian civilization was indeed disturbed by the common vices of our nature, and embittered by the usual miseries that wait on the present probationary state of man ; but, on the other hand, it is impossible to survey it without discovering the existence of certain high peculiar virtues in the morality which formed it, of the most admirable adaptation to all our wants, and in

* Stromat. Lib. VI. c. 16.

† 2 ad Tim. iii.

‡ Gilbert le XVIII. Siècle.

strictest conformity to our noblest and purest conceptions of perfection—virtues such as had never been seen, or to the same degree developed under any other form of human society, and which constitute evidently a link in the chain of universal order. Nay, traverse in every direction, if you will, the vast empires that have lost unity—no where will you ever find these peculiar and inalienable titles, which raise the Catholic morality above all that the human intelligence of itself had ever taught, or the human unassisted nature ever practised ; graces independent of individuality of temper or genius, of national character, or local influence, which defy all attempts to praise them worthily, or even to define them with precision, separated by a slender, hardly traceable, but wholly impassible line, from all human virtue ;—graces, than which nothing is found sweeter, nothing stronger, like the dew of heaven, while descending in separate drops, following a universal and invariable law, so as to be perfectly the same in each, dispensing equal benediction over the whole face of nature ;—graces, which the eyes of humanity are never quite prepared to witness, which, after having been practised nearly two thousand years, seem still in each contemporary act a divine novelty,—before which, astonished sufferers, and those who dread impending wrath, are often constrained, as we have seen in the late afflictions, to renounce all their fondest prejudices, and to fall upon their knees in a rapture of grateful admiration ;—gifts that almost render the person of man angelic, godlike, which the just of the middle ages all received, and which, in the Catholic church, will be found for ever.

CHAPTER X.

FROM a view of historical facts and characters during the middle ages, an attentive observer will have perceived that there were still many peculiar features of great import-

ance in the system of Catholic morals, besides those which we have already examined. These it must be our object in the remaining pages of this sixth book to investigate and explain. The difficulties which encompass persons without the sphere of unity in their first deliberations respecting the importance of returning to it, cannot be a subject of surprise when we bear in mind that the question then before them is one which must affect them in the most susceptible and intimate part, since it is one not alone of speculation and abstract philosophy, but much more of practical life and manners—a serious deliberation truly, to use the words of Plato, *οὐ γὰρ περὶ τοῦ ἐπιτυχόντος ὁ λόγος, ἀλλὰ περὶ τοῦ, ὅντινα τρόπον χρὴ ζῆν* *. In fact, where men had not been formed to the manners of the Catholic type, there was something far more difficult to overcome than any opinion before they could become living members of the universal Christian society. It was not merely principles and doctrines in that case that were to be changed. The men were to be changed : their souls, by means of new acts, and voluntary thoughts were to be put in a new psychological condition ; things were to be brought out by the associating principle in new intellectual combinations. St. Ambrose remarks the connection between belief and manners, saying, “*ubi cœperit quis luxuriari, incipit deviare a fide vera* †.” Before a comparison had been instituted between the moral philosophy of the ages of faith and that of latter times, it would have been well for many writers if they had studied the former in other sources besides the writings of the licentious satirists, and the annals of Scotch and English wars. If the work of Richard of St. Victor, *De exterminatione mali et promotione boni*, or his book *de statu interioris hominis*, or Abelard’s treatise on morals, “*know thyself* ;” had been examined, or if men had only read the twelve rules of John Picus of Mirandula, entitled *Regulæ Dirigentes*, or the letter which St. Francis addressed to all the Christians, religious, clergy, laics, men and women, who dwell in the universal world, greeting them with peace from heaven and charity in the Lord ‡, I am willing to believe that we should never have been

* Plato de Repub. Lib. I.

† Epist. Lib. VI. 36.

‡ Wadding, Ann. Minor. an. 1213.

told by respectable writers that morality was now better understood.

"To form a good system of ethics it is required, first, that it be precise, not to give place to the illusions of self-love ; secondly, certain, to bind firmly the liberty of man, who would not be subject to an uncertain law ; thirdly, predominant in the ideas of man, in order to overcome his passions ; fourthly, efficacious, administering an internal force to the assistance of reason, to sustain man in the practice of his duty." "All these qualities," concludes Spedalieri, "belong to the Catholic religion, and to no other *." The consequence of the modern principle of private judgment, which reduced the Christian religion to the rank of a human discipline, and from being a deposit of faith to be the sport of men's fancies, was that there arose as many opinions concerning it as there were heads, nec circa credenda tantum, sed circa agenda quoque ; for it is a fact of history and of experience, that there were not wanting persons who sought to justify from the Holy Scriptures, theft, adultery, and murder. It will be in vain to talk of appealing to extreme instances, and of drawing undue inferences from them when we have the histories of Germany, Switzerland and Scotland, furnishing a concurrent testimony to the truth of this assertion. A custom prevailed in the canton of Berne, associated with the first communion, which it is impossible to describe in these pages, and which, as the count of Stolberg before his conversion remarked, could only be elsewhere sought for among the inhabitants of the South Sea Islands †. Endeavouring, therefore, that at least the rule of manners might be preserved from wreck, other men, laying aside the interpretation of the sacred books, applied themselves to the study of what was termed the law of nature, founded on the authority of human reason ; supposing that they who differed concerning revelation might be made to agree upon moral doctrines. Hence a custom prevailed of teaching a moral discipline without any reference to religion, and of submitting all duties to the tribunal of human reason : which gave birth to innumerable treatises on moral philosophy and the law of nature, in which Christian motives were laid aside,

* Spedalieri de diritti dell' uomo IV.

† Reise in Der Schweiz, 20 B.

and the office of instruction was ascribed to philosophy, as in the heathen books *. Accordingly so similar was the result, that the words of Cicero might be taken into any narrative of recent times, and pass for a true delineation of them. "Other precepts have now succeeded to these," says the philosopher, "therefore some hold, that wise men should do all things for the sake of pleasure; for even from this turpitude of speech, learned men have not fled. Others think that dignity is to be joined with pleasure, that things greatly at variance with each other may be conjoined by the faculty of language. They who approve of that one direct course to praise with labour, are now left almost alone in the schools. *Prope jam soli in scholis sunt relictii.* This way, therefore, is now left desert and uncultivated, and already it is grown over with leaves and boughs †." A wondrous thing indeed it was, and most worthy of the attention of men truly wise, that whilst all people every where who had been trained according to the traditions and discipline of the Catholic church, possessed sure principles of justice and virtue, so that the rudest minds, although unable to give accurate definitions, nevertheless knew perfectly what was good, what was evil, what was agreeable to nature, what repugnant; in a word, all duties and all principles, and were able to exercise a right judgment respecting all the offices of life, the men who wished to be called wise, and the reformers of the church and of philosophy, were still disputing in schools respecting good and evil, and the foundations of a happy life, the origin of laws and duties, the principles of government and of society, and with such violence and diversity of sentiment, that after so many ages of disputation they were unable to agree in any definition; there being some found even to palliate if not to approve of sins that Gentiles in their parables condemn to their abyss and horrid pains; so that there was more judgment among the ignorant and rustic multitude, among boys and women than among bearded philosophers; more in the workshops of artizans than in the lyceums of learned men; and no kind, no condition or sex were so wanting in moral truth as those philosophic inquirers, whose only employment was the investigation of truth; the

* Ventura de Methodo Philosophandi, cap. 3. art. 5.

† Pro M. Cœlio, 17.

words of Cicero being still applicable to philosophers, “*quanto melius hæc vulgus imperitorum.*” The moderns seem to think, that in the judgment of morals as of poetry * there is nothing which gives pleasure or indignation, but what is mutable ; nothing in the principles of human society, or in the rule of human duties, fixed and eternal. The arrival of each new sophist is therefore hailed as the harbinger of some fresh light, which is to dispel the clouds and uncertainty in which their moral philosophy may be still involved. Let the system of this stranger be ever so extravagant and absurd, still if it only seem to be new, and above all if it hath been condemned by the Holy See, there are instantly found ingenious and eloquent men to advocate it, and to encourage the author.

“*Undique visendi studio Trojana juventus
Circumfusa ruit, certantque illudere capto.*”

In general on these occasions they are divided between the advice of the rash Thymoetes and the prudent Capys,

“*Scinditur incertum studia contraria vulgus.*”

Is the novelty to be admitted or not? becomes the question with a Christian people, who were to have been established and rooted in the faith once transmitted, and persevering unto the end in the doctrine of the apostles. The men of Catholic ages knew that there is an eternal law, as St. Thomas remarked, not from there having been from eternity those who might be subject to it, since God alone is from eternity, but because things which exist not in themselves exist in God, inasmuch as they are foreknown and preordained by him †. The Catholic had his eyes always fixed upon what is arranged according to perfect and eternal order, and therefore it was he who attained to that condition described by Plato, for in consequence of having such an object he neither committed nor suffered injustice, since when he suffered, he only suffered what Providence permitted, and moved always conformably to reason and to order ‡. St. Augustin speaks in no measured terms of an opinion which would now be designated as liberal, and says, that “some being moved by the variety of innumerable customs, sleeping men as it were, who have

* Hor. Epist. II. 1.

† 1, 2, 9, 91, Art. I.

‡ Plato de Repub. Lib. VI.

never risen from the sleep of folly, nor awakened to the light of wisdom, think that there is no justice in itself, but that the custom of each country constitutes justice, which must therefore vary." "They do not perceive," he adds, "that the rule of not doing to others what you do not wish they should do to you, can never vary, which sentence when referred to the love of God is the destruction of all crimes *."

During the middle ages, the Catholic rule of manners emanating to the people from the church, obviated the danger of uncertainty or variation in the fulfilment of human duties. "Ecclesia Dei ea quæ sunt contra fidem vel bonam vitam non approbat, nec tacet." This is what St. Augustin says. "The church," as Melchior Canus observed, "could not err in delivering precepts of manners, which are necessary to salvation, and common to the whole church." Indeed the infallibility of her decisions in matters of faith, necessarily involved certainty in respect to the rule of manners; for from the former men know accurately where to place the chief good and the chief evil, and as Cicero says, "where this is once found, the way of life is found;" *inventa vitæ via est conformatioque omnium officiorum* †. If the rule of faith be left depending on the private judgment of individuals, the way of manners, independent of Catholic traditions, and the influence of the Catholic church, will become like the way of darkness described by Æschylus :

— δυσοδοπαίπαλα
δερκομένοισι καὶ δυσομμάτοις ὁμῶς ‡.

Moreover men were not reduced to the necessity of drawing the practical inference for themselves from the principles of faith, however clear and easy might be the deduction. The people were to be expressly instructed, as the decrees of Ives de Chartres say, in all their essential duties to God, their neighbour, and themselves §. They were taught what St. Bernard shows in the third book of his considerations, that in all their actions they were to consider three things, first, what was lawful; secondly, what was decorous; and, thirdly, what was

* De Doct. Christ. Lib. III. cap. 14.

† De Finibus, Lib. V.

‡ Eumenid. 388.

§ Decret. Pars VI. c. 154.

expedient to do. They were taught that the Christian life might be described, as Rosmene says, in four words,—to do, to suffer, to be silent, and to pray,—to do the duties of one's state; to suffer willingly the internal and external tribulations that God might send; to be silent on the defects of others; and to pray to God incessantly in labour, in temptation, in the beginning and end of all works. Each man's own heart was to tell him whether he heard the words of God, which were the criterion to determine under what banner he was enrolled: and in order to ascertain that point, as St. Gregory saith, he had only to ask himself did he desire the celestial country; did he refrain from fleshly lusts; did he decline the glory of the world; did he abstain from coveting what belonged to others, and did he give to others what was his own*?"

Thus the destination of men was perfectly clear to them, so long as they only asked the question what have they to do? though when they wished to know more than that, whether to unriddle the endless destiny in the life of one single man, in the history of humanity, or in the whole course of nature, they were presented with mysteries which will, during the present life, for ever remain hidden to the human intelligence. No Catholic, where points of fact were set at rest, could ever be ignorant of what ought to be done in any of the great questions which agitate nations, any more than in the circumstances affecting his own private and domestic state. Every member of holy church was, as St. Anselm says, like a square stone, which stands equally well on any one of its six sides; for whether in prosperity or in adversity, in freedom or in subjection, in secret or in public, he stood firmly and persisted in his purpose†. What Hubert remarks of the Spaniards, and of all people of the south, that religion, custom, power, in short, the positive, determines many questions, the solution of which belongs generally to the province of romance writers‡, was strictly true of the Catholic society in every country during the middle ages. Taste, elegance, politeness, sentiment, were all included in the fulfilment of duty.

* Hom. XVIII. in Evan.

† S. Anselmi de Similitudinibus, cap. 173.

‡ Skizzen aus Spanien, XI.

In later times, abstractions have been substituted for things. Even men who have an exact knowledge of what is right and wrong, of what is allowed, and of what is forbidden, seem unable to recognize the actual circumstances under which they are called upon to put in practice what they have so often theoretically learned, so that in reality their religion is wholly separated from life; it is an embroidered suit, which is hung up in secret closets and never worn, and thus they pass their days amidst repeated occasions of obeying the law of God and of imitating Christ, without having the least idea that an occasion has ever been presented to them of doing so. Now in the middle ages, religion acted immediately and practically upon life; it was an every day suit. In the fortuneteller, men beheld the person from whose door they were to turn away in shuddering, in the profane assembly the moment when they were not to be ashamed of Christ, in the festival the day set apart from servile work, in the poor beggar the person of their Lord to whom the cup was due, in the cross by the way side, a type of the mystery which saved the world, in the priest the minister of Christ. Hence the harmony between the external order and the piety of the faithful was preserved. It is not that external circumstances are at present wanting, but that the art of recognizing them is lost, which is also, one may remark by the way, the art of rendering life poetical; for it is this reducing of religion to abstractions which makes life so monotonous and unpicturesque, so prosaic and material. Men now talk of realities as opposed to the fancies of youth and the tenderness of an unenlightened devotion, without knowing what realities in fact are, though nothing can be easier than to discover this. The Catholic life was a life of poesy and of ideal beauty, for reality is original sin. What is the ideal? In men, the ideal must be either absurd, or else the type which was in God's mind before original sin. Therefore the Catholic life, while in the highest degree poetic, was in the strictest sense a life of duty. Every thing was precise and definite in its course. Do you suppose that a savage and reckless path, like that of so many disciples of a modern poet, is more congenial to the muse? You are in error. Even for the attainment of what most enchant the heart of unsophisticated youth, the Catholic course was more inviting than a wild dedication of itself

to unpathed waters, undreamed shores, most certain to miseries enough. But to return, it was one of the greatest characteristics of the Catholic morality, and one of the great advantages of its authority, that it prevented all the sophisms of the passions with a precept or a declaration. Thus, as Manzoni remarks, when it was disputed whether men of a different colour from Europeans ought to be considered as men, the church, pouring on their foreheads the regenerative water, imposed silence for ever upon that discussion*.

Sismondi says that the church, by forbidding men to speak evil of each other, has prevented them from expressing the just judgment upon virtue and vice, and has put truth to silence. The reply of Manzoni deserves great attention. "Every time," he says, "that a person imagines he has found in the Catholic religion an obstacle to some sentiment, action, or institution, just and useful, generous and tending to social improvement, on examining it well, he will find either that the obstacle does not exist, and that its appearance arose solely from not having sufficiently observed religion, or else that this thing has not the character and the end which it seems to have at the first view. Besides the common illusion which springs from the weakness of our understanding, there is a constant temptation of hypocrisy, from which even the purest minds and most desirous of good are not exempt, of an hypocrisy which associates the idea of a greater good, the idea of a generous inclination with the desires of the predominant passion. If under such influence we condemn the rule of morality, we run the risk of serving some reprobate sentiment, which we do not confess even to ourselves†. On the other hand, from this positive and authoritative nature of the law of manners, it followed that the dangers which attend a thirst for justice were obviated.

It is a common reflection of Catholic moralists, that scruples only proceed from spiritual pride. This profound reflection is a proof among many, of the accuracy and depth which they have employed in the study of the human mind, and in the detection of the intricate windings of the passions. Manzoni observes that this moral malady attests the excellence of religion. The tendency

* Osservazioni sulla Morale Cattolica, 103.

† 239.

to perfection is so inseparable from it, that it is manifested at length even in the troubles and misery of the man who professes it. A mind devoured by the dread of not being sufficiently just, so as to lose its tranquillity, might have appeared as a prodigy of virtue, if religion herself, so superior to the views of men, had not shown in such a mind dispositions contrary to trust, to humility, and to Christian freedom; if it had not furnished the idea of a virtue from which all disordinate movements are excluded, and which in proportion as it advances to perfection, finds itself nearer to peace and to the highest reason *.

The results of extravagance in morals were profoundly estimated by the philosophers of the middle age. "Observe," says Richard of St. Victor, "that by how much more imprudently and immoderately any one casts himself down, to so much the more insane and enormous pride does he afterwards give way. Mark in this King Nebuchadonezzar, the inconstant and indiscreet humiliation which is succeeded by more than human pride; for he wh_o first adored Daniel, afterwards set up his own statue to be adored†." "What sort of charity is this, says S. Bonaventura, "by which you will at one time love your neighbour more than yourself and beyond the commandment, and at another so little that, contrary to the commandment, your love for him will be dissolved by favour or fear, disturbed by sadness, contracted by avarice, weakened by ambition, distorted by honours, cooled by envy? 'Noli nimium esse justus.' It is sufficient that you love your neighbour as yourself. 'Implore prius, et sic curato effundere‡.' "

The precision of the rule of duties furnished even occasion to many striking scenes, which history does not disdain to record, and gave dignity to acts that would otherwise have seemed too trifling for notice, as when Fructuoso, bishop of Tarragona, going to martyrdom, refused a drink which was offered to him, saying that the hour of breaking the fast was not come.

Again, it should be observed, that the only justice, the only morality recognized by the Catholic discipline, was

* Id. 292.

† Richard. S. Vict. de Eruditione Hominis Interioris, Lib. I. 1
c. 37.

‡ Meditat. Vitæ Christi, cap. 47.

that which involved all virtues and the fulfilment of all duties, the most common and vulgar as well as the most rare and sublime. "King Edward the Fourth," says the monk of Croyland, "testified the catholicity of his mind at the last; for he made restitution to every man whom he had defrauded or injured by extortion; and no better end could he have made than this, in which he endeavoured to imitate Zacchæus, and with this intention he might have hope, for it is not said that Christ had respect to the works of Zacchæus but to his mind *." In like manner, Henry the Second, emperor and third king, made restitution at his death of property which he had seized in his anger, and asked pardon of all whom he had injured †.

Hear how father John de Avila replies to a grandee of Spain who was sick, and who had written to ask his advice. "If you should have gained any thing at play, I wish you would restore it, and if you have encouraged or requested others to play and they have lost, I wish you would restore to them what they lost. You should publish through all the churches of your state, that if any of your servants or officers should have done injury to any one you are anxious to repair it ‡."

Shakspeare, who draws from life in Catholic society, describes Hamlet's uncle as wanting no instruction here.

" But, O, what form of prayer
Can serve my turn? Forgive me my foul murther!—
That cannot be; since I am still possess'd
Of those effects for which I did the murther,
My crown, mine own ambition, and my queen."

It is a common opinion with modern superficial writers, that the clergy praised indiscriminately all who gave riches to the church, and that by liberality to the clergy men believed themselves dispensed from observing justice in their secular relations; and here we should remark, how totally they are deceived in entertaining it. Not even from the casual observations of those who wrote upon subjects that had not immediate connexion with morals, can they find for it a shadow of ground. Hear

* Hist. Croylandensis in Rer. Anglic. Script. Tom. I. 564.

† Chronic. Hirsaugiensis, I.

‡ John de Avila, Part II. Epist. 62.

how Romuald, archbishop of Salerno, speaks of King William of Sicily. "This king," saith he, "greatly venerated the persons of ecclesiastics, and enriched the clergy with many gifts, and left in his testament large sums to be expended for the safety of his soul. He was a victorious king by sea and land, but hateful to his subjects; more feared than loved; in heaping up money very solicitous, in expending it not sufficiently liberal *."

The Catholic discipline was very strict with regard to those duties which men who affect great intellectual elevation, and particularly those who pretend to reform philosophy, are very apt to overlook. In the laws of the Visigoths, we read that there is no asylum for debtors in a church. The church defends no debtor, but delivers him up, provided he is not to be bound or struck; but in presence of the priest or deacon the time is to be fixed for paying the debt †. On the other hand, there was a heavy penalty by the civil laws against attacking the dead on account of debts, and insulting their funerals ‡.

When Gonsalvus Sancius, a man of arms at first, was converted to a religious life, he deemed it not enough to clothe him in good St. Francis's girdle, but he distributed all his goods among his creditors; and finding that there was not sufficient to repair the losses which he had occasioned while conducting the armies of Peter, king of Castile, he presented himself, with a cord tied round his neck, to all whom he had injured, and implored their pardon §. René Pazzi, who had shown from the first a horror at the conspiracy of his family, in which he had refused to take part, was nevertheless involved in the ruin which followed its defeat, and barbarously executed. He had always been very bountiful in alms to the poor, and a great benefactor to the churches. On the eve of the day of the fatal enterprize, he had paid all his debts with great exactness, and had returned to the owners all the goods which had been deposited in his warehouses, or at the custom-house under his name, in order that if any misfortune overtook him, no one might receive injury through him.

* Rer. Italic. Script. Tom. VII.

† Legis Wisigothorum, Lib. IX. tit. III. 4.

‡ Gregorius Tholosanus Præludia Jurisconsulti, Lib. II.

§ Wadding Annal. Minor. Tom. VIII.

Those debtor stones, which may be seen at Padua, Verona, Florence, and Sienna, before which a debtor used to be delivered from the pursuit of his creditors, on condition of his swearing, after a humiliating ceremony, that he had not five francs in his possession, indicate that in those times there was less intrepidity in crime and less severity in legislation than in subsequent ages. To these exact principles must be traced that wise and minute economy which was such a characteristic of many of the ancient kings, of which there are such striking instances in the lives of Charlemagne and other heroic Catholic princes. The Abbot Alexander says that Roger, king of Sicily, was never idle for an instant, but when not otherwise employed, he wrote or read documents relative to affairs, for of every thing there was an exact account kept in writing, and he gave nothing with inconsiderate liberality, heeding the common maxim “whoso liveth not according to number, will live to shame*.” The lesson which Dante learned in Paradise, was taught to each man on earth in Catholic times: that if evil fruit should follow good intent and strict obedience to the law of justice, all the ill derived from his well doing will not harm him aught, though it have brought destruction on the world†.

Even the admirers of the modern opinions could not but respect this inflexible justice in the followers of the ancient faith. “Queen Mary,” saith Weever, “resigned to God and holy church all those ecclesiastical revenues which had been annexed to the crown in the time of King Henry, saying, (with a Christian and princely resolution, I must confess,) to certain of her counsellors who objected that her crown imperial could not be honourably maintained and furnished without the possessions aforesaid, ‘that she set more by the salvation of her soul than she did by ten kingdoms‡.’”

While the strict and positive principles of Catholic morality protected dependents from the injustice of superiors, they afforded no less security to the latter against the dishonesty of those whom they employed. Merchants did not find in the cupidity of their agents such obstacles that

* *De Rebus Gest. Rogerii, Lib. IV. c. 3. Rer. Italic. Script. Tom. V.*

† *Parad. XX.*

‡ *A Discourse of Funeral Monuments, 115.*

even a lucrative operation presented them the chance of ruin if they did not personally conduct it in all the details. Assuredly, there was great commercial activity during the middle ages; but it did not involve speculations without regard to justice, bankruptcies, and all the other attendants on a general demoralization. The modern governments have begun to discern how fatal for the state is the influence of individual cupidity, and more than once the ministers of commerce have used a language in their circulars which would not have been out of place in our churches. Not a little remarkable is the manner in which the uncompromising and precise justice of the Catholic discipline appears to have influenced even the municipal laws of cities, and the minute ordinances of police respecting them, which in point of wise provision for the health and security of the inhabitants were far different from what the moderns are in habits of supposing. The measures ordained for the city of Lyons in the time of St. Louis, and of king Charles Fifth, the ordinances of the magistrates from the year 1261 to 1483 would do honour to the best regulated municipality of the present day*. The interests even of learning were here promoted, as may be witnessed in the strict justice which was required in the sale of books, and secured by the statutes of the university of Paris in the thirteenth century†. Dante beholds the usurer in hell, and says that his was a crime that offends celestial goodness. Such was the belief of the middle ages. Guibert, abbot of Nogent relates a dreadful example. A notorious usurer at Laon being on his death-bed demanding interest from a poor woman who had paid him the principal, and who in vain implored its remittance, persisted, declaring that the interest must be paid. She brings it deficient only in one penny, and places the money before him; he swears that he will have that one. She again goes away, and beyond her hopes finds it, and brings it to him. Being now in his agony, he seizes the piece of money, puts it into his mouth, and swallowing it by accident, breathes out his soul, and with that viaticum migrates one can conceive whither: his body is cast out, and deservedly rejected from sacred places. So much for the corroders of the poor ‡.

* Paradin Hist. de Lyons, Liv. II. cap. 67, 68. 87. and 110.

† Hist. Universit. Par. Tom. III.

‡ Guiberti de Novigento de Vita Propria, Lib. III. cap. 18.

In the council of Lyons, which condemned the heresy of those called the poor men, it was ordained that no priest should receive to confession a manifest and notorious usurer, and that no absolution could be granted to him until he had made restitution, or given sufficient security that he would do so as far as he was able. Foulques, the celebrated preacher, particularly directed his zeal against usury, which had been introduced from Italy into France about his time, and many usurers, after hearing his sermons, restored their unlawful profits to the poor *. When Rodolph, of Habsberg, was asked why he did not give part of the goods of the Jews to some churches, instead of distributing all among the poor, he replied, “ Do you not know that these goods were acquired by usury, and therefore unjustly gained ; but the church of God is holy, and can only be honoured with goods that have been obtained with justice †.” The hospitality and munificence of Reginaldo Scrovinio were celebrated through all Italy ; but the generous use which he made of his immense riches could not tranquillize his conscience. Contrite for the usury of which he had been guilty, and for which Dante rashly places him in the Inferno, he went to Rome, and being enjoined to make restitution, was absolved by Pope Benedict, who had been his guest and friend. After his death, Henry, his son, moved by filial piety, and concern for his soul, purchased the arena at Padua, on which had been a theatre, and on the spot erected a magnificent church, which he adorned with the paintings of Zoto ‡. Those who would learn what were the usurious iniquities of the Jews, and their abettors in Italy, many of whom were persons in authority, in the fifteenth century, should consult the sermons of Bernardine of Monte Feltro, whom they sought to poison, on account of his zeal in protecting the people from them, and the report of local historians of that time, commemorating the foundation of mounts of piety, with the pontifical bulls establishing the same, which were instituted at his suggestion in almost all the cities of Italy, a glorious monument of the order of St. Francis, in testimony of its affection for the poor §.

* Bulæus, Hist. Universit. Parisiensis, Tom. II.

† Trithem. Chronic. Hirsaugiensis ad an. 1283.

‡ Bernardini Scardeonii Hist. Patavinæ, Lib. III. 13.

§ Wadd. Ann. Minorum, Vols. XIV. and XV.

The church never allowed any money to be made of money, independent of compensation for danger of loss or temporal injury *. Calvin denied that usury was a sin, whom many heretics followed, amongst others Claudio Salmasius, though with strange inconsistency they condemned the mounts of piety for receiving any remuneration, probably because they were sanctioned by the popes, though these were administered by charitable persons who received no salary. Indeed in some places at first, as at Vicenza, money was given freely, only with an admonition to be grateful, and an intimation that whatever was voluntarily given would be expended in charity to others; in consequence of which many offered a greater sum than was prescribed by Bernardine. Although the church has not given any formal decision, and it be probable that the question respecting the practice of northern nations in modern times, will be, nevertheless, determined practically in its favour, still, it is certain, that during the middle ages, the lending of money, which was of no immediate use to themselves, formed one of the offices of humanity and charity, to which men and Christians believed themselves bound †; and St. Thomas was of opinion that they had no right to make the person pay for the advantage he derived from the loan, because that results from the use to which he applied it, and they had no right, he thought, to make him pay for his own industry ‡. But if by lending money men suffered inconvenience, or incurred danger, in that case they were at all times permitted to receive a moderate interest. The legislation respecting the rate of interest in the states, which embraced the new opinions, presented a curious example of what might result when the system of Catholic morality was abandoned, as may be witnessed by referring to the acts of the English parliament in the reign of Elizabeth. Again the Catholicity of the justice of the ages of faith did not admit of those separations and divisions which appear in the writings of Macrobius and Plotinus, who enumerate four degrees of virtue, or of Plato, who even presents virtue occasionally in several detached parts, as piety in Euthyphro, fortitude in Laches, temperance in Charmides, friendship in Lysides; but as

* Joan. Devoti Instit. Canonic. Lib. IV. tit. XVI. † Id. Ibid.

‡ In III. d. 37. Qu. I. Art. 6.

in Meno it was beheld in connection with all virtue. Some indeed of the ancient sages, as Menedimus of Eretia, and Ariston of Chio, and also Zeno, maintained that virtue was one and without plurality of parts, though men spoke of it under different terms *; but Chrysippus thought that each virtue was something distinct and perfect in itself, and so introduced, as Plato says, a whole swarm of virtues into philosophy. Duns Scotus observed, "that there is no distinction of essential perfections in God †;" quoting St. Augustin, "Non sicut in creatura sapientia et justitia sunt duæ qualitates, ita in Deo, sed quæ justitia ipsa est, et bonitas ‡." Similarly, the fruits of essential grace in men emanating from one principle were held to be in necessary connection with each other. "Neither is there," as St. Clemens Alexandrinus saith, "one virtue for women and another for men, but one and the same for both; for temperance and justice, and all other virtues are alike to be cultivated by man and woman, freeman and slave, since one and the same virtue belongs to one and the same nature §." "Virtutis vis," says Marsilius Ficinus, "in unione potius quam in divisione consistit ||." St. Gregory speaks to the same effect, "Neque enim unaquæque verè virtus est, si mixta aliis virtutibus non est ¶." Natural and imperfect virtues might exist separately, but it was deemed impossible for any one to be perfectly gentle and mild, without being at the same time chaste, brave, magnanimous, humble, sober, just, and prudent, in the same manner as one sin could not be committed, and but one sin. An ancient author illustrates this by an example, "An injury is inflicted; faith teaches that revenge is displeasing to Jesus Christ, and by that light the understanding says that we must not take revenge. Hope says, by conquering this temptation we shall be nearer acquiring an immense good. Charity says our neighbour is to be beloved even when he does evil. Prudence says this is a favourable opportunity of preparing a crown for ourselves. Justice admonishes us to give to every one what belongs to him, and it is for God to punish evil. Modesty says, do not admit the deformity of anger, which has so hideous an exterior. Humility

* Plutarch de Virtute. † In Lib. I. Sent. Dist. VIII. 4. 9.

‡ S. August. de Trin. XV. 5. § Stromat. Lib. IV. 8.

|| Epist. Lib. I.

¶ S. Greg. Mor. Lib. I. c. 9.

says that we should give place to others, and that we deserve more than we receive. Temperance forbids us to indulge in the hateful pleasure of vengeance. Magnanimity says, be gentle not only on small but on great occasions. Behold how the acts of virtue conspire and cohere * !” This truth Giles of Colonna illustrates, by remarking that a magnanimous man is necessarily humble †, and St. Clemens Alexandrinus by showing that temperance is not confined to pleasures only, but that there is a temperance in regard to the tongue, and to possessions, and to desires. “ By these two things,” says Richard of St. Victor, “ pride and concupiscence, the prince of this world, dwelleth in us, by pride in the mind, by concupiscence in the flesh. ‘ Venit princeps hujus mundi,’ says Christ, ‘ et in me non habet quicquam.’ For all the possession of the ancient enemy is sin, to which is attached as an inheritance for ever, a land full of thorns and briars, a land cursed of God, covered with obscurity and darkness. Of all this substance nothing was found in Christ ‡.” St. Odo, the second abbot of Cluni, reduces these to one principle of injustice, observing that pride is the mother of all vices, and that therefore the Psalmist says, “ In superbia ceciderunt, qui operantur iniquitatem.” “ No one,” he remarks, “ works iniquity externally, unless he has fallen internally by pride: for if the spirit be devoutly subject to the Lord, the flesh cannot unlawfully raise itself against the spirit; but if it proudly despises its Author, justly is it despised by its vassal flesh. Therefore, the venom of lust is borne from the root and merit of pride §.” In short, those who understood and followed the broad commandments of Catholicism, beheld, as the Psalmist beautifully expresses it, the end of all perfection—in manners, as in wisdom, in arts and science, as well as in morality and life; for it requires but a moment’s reflection to discern that the justice of the ages of faith extended even to the sphere of art. What good faith and integrity is observable in their very architecture? Here is no affectation and desire of temporary applause. The most obscure and

* Instruct. Novitiorum, cap. 22. aut P. Joan à Jesu Mariæ.

† De Regim. Prin. II. I. 25.

‡ Richard S. Vict. Sermo in Die Paschæ.

§ S. Odonis Abb. Clun. Collationum, Lib. II. Bibliothec. Cluniacensis.

retired parts are as elaborately finished as those which are the most exposed to view. Ascend to those aerial deserts, to the highest summit of the spires of a Gothic cathedral, to which the tiler ventures to creep with trembling. You will often find there, solitary under the eye of God, exposed to the blasts of the eternal wind, some delicate work, some masterpiece of sculpture, on which the pious workman wore away his life : not a name, not a sign, not a letter ; he worked for God only, and for the remedy of his soul. In pagan art, as in morals, the maxim universal agreed with that sentiment of Phædra,

*ἴμοι γάρ εἴη μήτε λανθάνειν καλὰ,
μήτ' αἰσχρὰ δρώσῃ μάρτυρας πολλοὺς ἔχειν *.*

Indeed in relation to art the admirable efficacy of the Catholic morals has been often pointed out, and though in the third book we had occasion to consider it in detail, I cannot leave this specular mount without casting again one look towards it. Come ascend with me to the high regions of the cathedral of Fribourg in Brisgaw. Let us rest awhile in this octagonal hall, within the tower, commanding such a delightful view over the city and the mountains of the Black Forest. This cathedral was built by Erwin von Sternbach, who was also the architect of that at Strasburg, a man, as a living French critic observes, who ought to have the renown of Michael Angelo ; but the middle ages were careless of human glory, and Erwin von Sternbach was more anxious about his salvation in Paradise than to obtain immortality in the human memory. Truly, the thirst for justice in the middle ages supplied men with prodigious means for performing great things, even of a material order. As Spedalieri says, “Their system of ethics was efficacious, administering an internal force not only to sustain man in the practice of his duty, but to encourage and assist him in the development of his genius.” Our modern generations have their budgets and their taxes ; they had faith which could inspire thoughts that would never occur to our councils of civil works, and which could realize them with a facility that would never arise from

* Hippolyt. 402.

the vote of a parliament or the approbation of a scientific journal. But let us descend and proceed.

The general ideas of justice in the ages of faith, were derived from the example of Christ, from the models which he proposed in his instructions, and from the spectacle and observation of nature. "Christ," says the Master of the Sentences, "died to be for man both form and cause. The form of virtue and humility, the cause of glory and freedom, the form of obeying God unto death, and the cause of deliverance and beatitude *." Hence, as Marsilius Ficinus says, "Christ was a certain living moral book of divine philosophy, sent from heaven and manifested to human eyes to teach us true justice, as possessing nothing of his own, and rendering to God and man what is due to each,—to God adoration, and to man benevolence†." A great writer of those times, after citing the words of the Gospel, "teaching them to do what soever I have commanded you," proceeds thus, "O happy and meritorious obedience, which thinks of nothing but constantly how to fulfil the will of our heavenly Father! O how holy the soul which endeavours to resign itself and to render its whole life conformable to the manners of Christ! Truly Jesus Christ hath left the best example of living to us all. He is the master of all; he himself is the book and rule of the religious, he himself the convent of monks, he himself the text and gloss of the decretals: he is the form of the life of clerics, the doctrine of laics, the light of the faithful, the joy of the just, the glory of angels, the end and consummation of all the desires of the saints ‡." The second of these rules is beautifully illustrated by Hugo of St. Victor, who after citing the divine words, "unless you become like little children," speaks in the following manner. "What then are the manners of a boy? He is not solicitous nor covetous: he exercises himself in simple and innocent play, and he so loves what is domestic, that if he were even transferred to a throne, he would rather desire the ancient things and what he was accustomed to. He knows his father's grounds; now he is in the field, now in the garden, now in the orchard, now in the meadow,

* Lib. III. Distinct. 18.

† Marsil. Ficin. de Christiana Relig. cap. 23.

‡ Thom. à Kempis, Serm. I. Pars III.

now at the fountain, now in the vineyard. He knows the peculiar delights which belong to each season of the year. In the spring he follows ploughing and sowing, in the summer reaping, and in the autumn the vintage. Every where he has pastime, mirth, refection, delight ; and besides these daily and domestic feasts which he enjoys at home, by going out sometimes to taste servants' fare, he returns with more relish to former delights ; he loves to gather the new fruits, to roast the corn before it be matured in the ear, to pick out the first ripe grapes, to carry home a young bird with great joy to the house in order to love and nourish it. If he knows that his father is about to go to any town or castle, or to market, or to some solemnity with the intention of returning immediately, he wishes to go with him that he may see new and unaccustomed things, so that on his return he may relate what he has seen to his comrades, describing the appearance of the men, the situation of the place, the extent of the city, the height of the house, the abundance of things on sale. Thus when he knows that he is to return, he gladly leaves home ; but if he were not to hope for a return, and if any one were to attempt to compel him to go forth, he would not leave his father's house without lamentable groans and great sorrow. He is glad to have diversion abroad, but he wishes to have no permanent abode any where excepting in his father's house with his domestics, among whom he was born and with whom he was bred : he desires to live with them, and to grow old amongst them, nor would he be separated from them even in death, but he would wish to be always with those who have been known and dear to him in life. Nothing beyond this he seeks, nothing more does he desire. In like manner then, let us study to converse in the house of the Lord, and we too shall find peace and rest, and pleasure ; let us be simple, not desiring foreign things, loving more the delights which God hath prepared for us, and which are found in his house, rather than the blandishments of this world. Here we have transparent fountains, flowery meadows, wide and swelling fields, rich vineyards, abundant flocks, fertile crops, fruitful trees, irrigated gardens, and delights of every kind, all in short that the mind can desire or possess. Do you ask what are these fountains, meadows and gardens ? The examples of the just, the sources of

wisdom, and the sweets of all virtue ; for we have our feet directed in the ways of the commandments of God, that remembering his mercies which have been from all generations, we may exercise our heart and enkindle our desire in his love : we can contemplate all the works of our restoration, from the beginning to the end of the world, according to the course of time, the events of things, and the deeds of men *." Finally, manners were not left without participating in the influence of that wisdom which is derived from the spectacle and observation of the visible world. The great guides of Catholic ages were men of Wordsworth's type, who intensely studied with a painter's eye and poet's heart, all the spirit-moving imagery of earth and sea, and air ; men, in short, whose whole lives flowed in a course of sympathy divine with nature. Much they learned from each walk through their forest glades, where birds and brooks from leafy dells chimed forth delicious music ; for not alone the cooing of the gentle dove, but every bird and flower inspired their meditative hearts. The efficacy and justice of this rule must be even in a peculiar manner apparent, methinks, to those who are fallen upon the present days, though so little consonant with the muse ; for when they walk on a morning in the spring through those parks and gardens of their capitals, once the haunts, perhaps, of the hooded brethren of Francis or St. Bruno, and behold the fresh innocent generation of young leaves bursting forth simultaneously with such order,—the only heaven-inspired things that now remain there,—it is impossible for them not to think occasionally with astonishment and sorrow on the crowd of intellectual creatures around them, so obdurate to justice, and disobedient and out of tune amidst this sweet creation that was intended to utter one universal voice of love and praise. Hugo de St. Victor, in his work entitled, "On Beasts," instructs men in various duties from the example of divers irrational animals and other creatures. He, too, like the great poet of the Lakes, would remark in speaking of the wren and her nest, that "The hermit has no finer eye for shadowy quietness." The monks had frequently that intimate acquaintance with the manners of birds

* Hugo de S. Victor, *Institutiones Monast. de Vanitate Mundi*, Lib. II.

which Olaus Magnus evinces in his history, where he describes with such amusing simplicity those of the northern tribes.

It was in the spirit of those times to consider beasts and birds as endowed with characters analogous to human ; and so successful were the fabulists that almost every bird and beast was known to the middle ages as a personage under an appropriate name, which in some languages, as with Renard in the French, by a singular fate remained to the animal, having superseded its own generic appellation. Giles of Colonna, too, throughout his work on government, cites the example of animals to instruct men in various moral duties ; and Bartholomew Glaunville, of the family of the counts of Suffolk, an English Franciscan of the fourteenth century, followed in the same track in his work on the advantages of philosophy to a theologian, in which, with learning and subtle observation, he explained the properties of material things, by means of which he threw light on difficult passages of the Holy Scripture. The most interesting illustration of this rule may be found, perhaps, in the rhyme composed by Alanus de Insulis, the universal doctor.

“ Omnis mundi creatura
Quasi liber et pictura,
Nobis est et speculum,
Nostræ vitæ, nostræ mortis,
Nostri status, nostræ sortis,
Fidele signaculum.

Nostrum statum pingit rosa,
Nostri status decens glosa,
Nostræ vitæ lectio.
Quæ dum primo mane floret,
Defloratus flos efforet
Vespertino senio.
Ergo spirans flos exspirat
In pallorem, dum delirat
Oriendo moriens.

Sic ætatis ver humanæ,
Juventutis primo mane,
Reflorescit paululum.
Mane tamen hoc excludit,
Vitæ vesper, dum concludit
Vitale corpusculum.

Cujus decor dum perorat
 Ejus decus, mox deflorat
 Ætas, in qua defluit.
 Fit flos fœnum, gemma lutum :
 Homo cinis, dum tributum
 Homo morti tribuit,

 Cujus vita, cuius esse
 Pœna, labor et necesse,
 Vitam morte claudere.
 Sic mors vitam, risum luctus,
 Umbra diem, portum fluctus,
 Mane claudit vespe.

 In nos primum dat insultum
 Pœna mortis gerens vultum
 Labor mortis histrio.
 Nos proponit in laborem :
 Nos assumit in dolorem :
 Mortis est conclusio.

 Ergo clausum sub hac lege
 Statum tuum homo lege,
 Tuum esse respice.
 Quid fuisti nasciturus,
 Quid in præsens, quid futurus,
 Diligenter inspice.

 Luge pœnam, culpam plange,
 Motus fræna, fastum frange,
 Pone supercilia.
 Mentis rector et auriga
 Mentem rege, fluxus riga
 Ne defluant in devia."

Thus were truth and justice taught by every garden, grove, and field, which preached, though mute, "of all things blending into one."

CHAPTER XI.

ENOUGH has been seen to prove the fact of a second creation of the human race, albeit, in harmony with the first, and only a fresh manifestation of an endless

love. Still somewhat remains to complete this scene of our historic vision—something as yet but faintly sketched, or left for others to supply, which we should strive to develope with more force and precision. Attentive consideration is due, for instance, to the fact that the justice of the ages of faith did not flow from the inclination or partialities of individuals, but from the authoritative promulgation of a universal law recognized as divine. The character of all ages which have not been under the influence of faith, is independence of authority. “If I should resolve to fast at all, I will fast on whatever day I choose, by my own choice and with full liberty.” It was thus that *Aerius* used to speak according to St. Epiphanius. One might remark here how unamiable and offensive even to the eyes of humanity is this condition of self-will, and how the principle of Catholic obedience imparted both grace and security to virtue. Does a youth practise any act from a private opinion which is counter to the common voice? He is referred to the judgment of men more acute or more experienced than himself, and if he persist he may, perhaps, very justly incur the odium attached to singularity and obstinate perverseness: but in yielding to the highest authority, he is invulnerable, for if he should incur blame in the fulfilment of duty, he will be supported by a reliance not on his own abilities and superior judgment, but on the cloud of witnesses, on the unerring wisdom and infallible reason of the church, which commands him to adhere though he should have to stand alone, to the maxims of faith and of the ancient honour. Hence it is noted by S. Bonaventura, “quod propter alterius scandalum non debemus recedere a virtute justitiae,” “for our Lord both in word and deed gave scandal to the Pharisees *,” a remark to be pressed on those who are always trembling lest by observing Catholic manners, they should offend persons who are separated from unity. It was, however, the determination of the will which constituted the chief advantage arising from an authoritative rule of manners; for however magnificently some philosophers may declaim, justice hath but little to expect on earth when men are wholly left to the guidance of a mind which has banished the sense of responsibility, and to

* *Meditationes Vitæ Christi*, cap. 38.

maintain their principles on the same ground as that on which the giant of Homer defended himself against the reproach of his captive who warned him to beware of Jove, the avenger of injured guests, to whom he replied, Νήπιος εἰς, ὁ ξεῖνος,—“I care not for Jove, my will is my law.”

During the middle ages, doctrines were the source of all laws and discipline; as canons were nothing but conclusions drawn from theological principles, that is from the Gospel*. “When pride and spiritual riches, and the liberty of a light mind existed, there” says the author of *Theologia Germanica*, “could be no Christian or true imitator of Christ†.” “In hac vita,” continues this writer, speaking of the Christian life, “perit omnis ipsitas, ego, meum, et similia. Finally, nothing is beheld or sought after but good, on account of good and as good. But where there is a false light, there is no regard to Christ or to virtue; whatever is accommodated and pleasant to nature, is then sought for and embraced. Hence arises a false and inordinate liberty, by which a man is rendered secure and negligent of every thing. True light is the seed of God, and therefore it bears the fruit of God, but false light is the seed of Satan, and where that is sown, there grows up the fruit of Satan and Satan himself‡.”

Æschylus terms God Μέγας εὐθυνος βροτῶν §. This was in every sense a true definition in the middle ages. God, not human opinion, directed immediately the manners of men, which while dependent upon doctrines for their rule, derived their force and efficacy from the authority of a divine legislator. “One thing only is to be feared,” says St. Chrysostom, “that is sin.” Alcuin proclaimed this in verse,

“ Plus æternae Dei Christi est metuenda potesta,
Quam terrena quidem, quæ velut umbra volat ||.”

The Archduke Leopold William, of Austria, assumed for device upon his shield, the words “Timore domini,” to express the sentiment which was ever present to his

* Benedict. XIV. *De Sacrificio Missæ Præfat.* XXI.

† *Theologia Germanica*, cap. 24.

‡ *Id. cap. 38.*

§ Eumenid. 273.

|| Mabillon vet. *Analect.*

mind. “I charge you,” says St. Gregory to Justin, in his letter to the Praetor of Sicily, which is taken into the decrees of the church, “by the omnipotent God, to whose tremendous judgment we are to give an account of all our actions, to have always before your eyes the extension of his glory. ‘Quam sit vita brevis aspicite; ad quem quandoque ituri estis judicem cuius judiciariam potestatem geritis cogitate*.’” You perceive on what motives he placed reliance. “It is not advisable that we should be for ever silent to those under our authority,” says the Abbot Elfric, writing to Wulstan, archbishop of York, “for if it be not the principal herald, who is to announce that the Judge cometh?” Such was, in fact, the summary of all the ecclesiastical charges, “the Judge cometh.” So far were they from asserting the simple and unconditional benevolence of God, and on that assumption going on, like Paley, to found a moral system and a rule of life, as if God were not a God of justice as well as a God of mercy.

Men in these days talk of securing justice by constitutional laws, by their representative assemblies, by publicity as the surest test, and the force of general opinion as the best rule of human action; but it was not by such means, which have more show than real efficacy, that society was protected during the ages of faith. It was by the fear of heaven, it was by the preaching of the clergy, it was even by the warnings of solemn poets; as when a Martial d’Auvergne, in his Vigils of the death of Charles the Seventh, concludes with such words as these :

“ Et n'est roy, empereur, duc, conte,
Qui ne soit subject à la mort,
Et qu'il ne faille rendre conte
De ce qu'on a fait droit ou tort †.”

It was by a Dante disclosing those visions of future punishment, placing before men’s eyes

“ The border of the crimson-seething flood,
Whence, from those steep’d within, loud shrieks arose;”

That region of eternal woe

* Iponis Carnot. Decret. Pars XVI. cap. 18.

† Les Vigiles de la Mort du Roi Charles VII.

"Where sighs, with lamentations and loud moans,
Resounded through the air pierc'd by no star,
That e'en he wept at entering*."

It is not unimportant to remark that the views respecting the motives of human action in more recent times, have been opposed to all the primitive traditions of mankind. Demophon, in the *Heraclidæ* of Euripides, had three reasons not to deny the petition of Iolaus and the suppliants,—the remembrance of their near relation in blood, the debt of gratitude which he still owed to their father, but what was the greatest and above all, the thought of Jove and reverence for his altar†.

Finally, the morality of the ages of faith, was not superstitious or delusive, but spiritual and living. Those devotions which we examined in the last book, those supplications of the blessed friends of God, were not to be sterile, empty, and deceptive things. "What sort of justice would it be," says St. Chrysostom, "to venerate the saints and to neglect sanctity? The first step of devotion is to love holiness, and afterwards those that are holy: without reason, therefore, doth he honour the just, who loveth not justice." To live well, in the language of the middle ages, was to live by faith; and that, as far as related to the sphere of ordinary justice, was to live, as the Roman philosopher says, "Constanter, graviter, sapienter, fortiter." Devotion knew of no prayers which did not include imitation. It may wound the pride of men professedly philosophers, to hear that the chaplet would dispense them from consulting the Stagyrite, but nothing is more true, for history alone is sufficient to prove that no discourses of the ethic page were wanting to the church, "quæ ædificatur ut civitas, cuius participatio ejus in id ipsum."

Modern historians having read that King Robert caused holy relics to be secretly removed from the shrine upon which certain persons, who would probably perjure themselves, were about to swear, have concluded that the morality of these ages was little better than abject superstition, proving clearly the justice of their affirmation that the science of morals is now better understood; but they should remark that the error which they ascribe to this devout king, arising from a weakness that is at all

* X.

† 236.

times in human nature, was expressly denounced by writers of that age. Evidently that act was merely the result of his wish to prevent unhappy men from accumulating sin, by adding sacrilege to perjury; or at the most, it merely indicated an opinion which has the sanction of the legislature at the present day, that the asseveration of a falsehood upon a sacred object, as the holy scriptures, was more to be dreaded than a simple utterance of the same without such formalities, though that is an opinion which abstractedly the moral writers of the middle age condemned. "It is thought by some," says Iona, in his celebrated work *De Institutione Laïcale*, "that he only is obnoxious to the crime of perjury who falsely swears over the bones of some holy man, or over relics, or upon the altar or the Gospel, but he who invokes God upon anything, whether great or small, is to be held guilty*."

The importance attached to diverse minute acts, has also been supposed to argue a degradation in the morals of the middle ages; though if we attend to the reasons for which they were inculcated, and hear the explanations which were continually given respecting them, and observe their practical consequences in history, a judicious inquirer will be slow to assent to any such judgment. Men of philosophic heads, who were ardently attached to Christian simplicity, like Jerome Savanorola, were able easily to prove that Catholic manners were not superstitious, though they exactly followed all the approved ceremonies of the Roman church†; and saints of the desert, who had long experience in the direction of human minds, could affirm with perfect conviction that if they had been practised, some men, whose crimes stand in historic records, would not have fallen. "If Peter," says blessed John Climachus, "had repeated to himself sixty or an hundred times on his way to Olivet, 'Dixi, custodiam vias meas, ut non delinquam in lingua mea,' he would not so easily have thrice denied his Lord‡." When questioning history in relation to such duties, if not great things are to be the result of our investigation, I hope it will be such as are well; for, as

* Ionæ Aurelianensis Episcop. de Institut. Laïcali, Lib. II. cap. 25, apud Dacher. Spicileg. Tom. I.

† Savanorola de Simplicitate Vitæ Christianæ, cap. I.

‡ Grad. XI.

Demosthenes says in Stobæus, “Not what is great is well, but what is well is great.” And this, I believe, will be the issue, for the moralists of the middle ages might truly say with Raban Maur, “Ubi etiam cavendus est æternus interitus, omnia sunt magna quæ dicimus*.”

Lewis of Granada, after quoting our Lord’s words to the Pharisee, in which he summed up all the particular acts of veneration which Mary Magdalen had performed towards him when anointing his feet, adds, “ My mind receives a wonderful consolation from this enumeration of the offices, for I conclude from it, with what eyes the infinite goodness of God contemplates the actions of pious men, when all the circumstances of a good work, and as I may say, particles, are so distinctly noted, that a simple duty is divided minutely into as many parts as it has circumstances, to each of which a reward is given†.” These words furnish the key to a mystery involving much that gives offence to the moderns in the morality of the ages of faith. Even when abuse may have crept in, the superstition did not arise from the external act, but from the sole cupidities of man, which would have been no less in action though there had been no such external act. It is a gross error to suppose that we can get rid of the evil by changing its form. “ When the Corsair promises wax, the galley is in danger,” say the Spaniards. But were devout men, the contemporaries of St Jerome, therefore superstitious, who offered their lights before the shrines of the saints, as a sublime symbol of the honour due to the friends of God? And have the moderns eradicated the superstition from amongst themselves by removing the lights and the shrines? The men of latter ages in general have fallen into this error, which has been able to disorganize the whole frame of the social state. In what society was superstition more hateful, than in that which was frankly Catholic? and in what had it greater force, than in that which professed to be reformed? Fuller acknowledges that too many in his days of reform were like Pharaoh’s magicians, who could conjure up with their charms more new frogs, but could not remove those multitudes of frogs which were there before. With respect to the supposed insignificance of certain actions

* Rabani Mauri de Institutione Clericorum, Lib. III. c. 32.

† Id. In Festo B. Mariæ Magdal. Concio. II.

recommended by the Catholic moralists, men would do well to pause before they censure.

Cicero extols the saying of Pythagoras, “*Tum maxime, et pietatem et religionem versari in animis, cum rebus divinis operam daremus;*” and the saying of Thales, that all visible things were full of divinity, so that the divinity should be in the eyes as well as in the minds of men*. But a more striking fact is adduced in evidence by John Picus of Mirandola, when he shows, in allusion to this subject, that one of the twelve conditions of a lover, is to love all things which belong to him that is loved, all his friends, houses, vests, and images †. All these minute observances might be vindicated, in the words even of a great modern poet, who says,

“Thing and thought

Mix strangely; trifles light, and partly vain,
Can prop, as you have learnt, our nobler being:
Yes, lady, while about your neck is wound
(Your casual glance oft meeting) this bright cord,
• What witchery, for pure gifts of inward seeing
Lurks in it, Memory’s helper, Fancy’s lord,
For precious tremblings in your bosom found ‡!”

The saying of Gerson had become a maxim with spiritual men, that God was a rewarder not of verbs but of adverbs; that is, he did not regard so much the substance of the action, as the manner and circumstances belonging to it, which grammarians express by adverbial terminations. The more noble theologians held with Drexelius, in his golden little book “*De recta intentione,*” that a virtual intention in the performance of particular actions, although sufficient for the moral integrity of the work, is not sufficient for procuring an increase of grace. Moreover, it should be observed, that all the rewards of devotion of necessity implied holiness or amendment of manners, and that the performance of no exercise of piety was reconcileable with a neglect of any one of the essential duties of a virtuous life. Against the superstitions or vanities of the learned, the moralists of the middle ages were equally guarded.

“What do the holy Apostles teach us?” demands

* *De Legibus, II. 11.* † *XII. Regulæ Dirigentes.*

‡ Wordsworth.

S. Bonaventura, “ not the dramatic art, not how to read Plato, not how to entangle ourselves in the subtleties of Aristotle, not how to learn always, and never to come to the knowledge of truth ; but they teach me how to live. Do you think it a small matter to know how to live ? truly, it is a great thing, yea, the greatest of all ; for he does not live who is inflated with pride, debased by luxury, and infested with other plagues : since this is not to live but to confound life, and to approach to the gates of death :—but you live well if you live orderly, sociably, and humbly ; orderly with regard to yourself, sociably in relation to others, and humbly in respect to God ; orderly if you be careful in your conversation, to preserve your ways right in the sight of the Lord, and in the sight of your neighbour ; sociably if you seek to be loved and to love, and to show yourself gentle and affable, and to bear not only patiently, but willingly, the infirmities of your brethren, as well of their manners as of their bodies ; humbly, if doing all this, you avoid the spirit of vanity, and deny all consent to it *.”

Indeed, to display the living character of the Catholic morality during the middle ages, words need not be multiplied. The foundation of all sanctity was known to be purity of conscience †, which was only attainable by the supernatural strength communicated in the mysteries of the Christian faith. “ The life of the interior man,” says Richard of St. Victor, “ is divine grace, for as the body can do nothing without its life, the soul, so our interior man can do nothing good without divine grace ‡.” In regard to the Divine Scriptures, men paid no Judaic and superstitious regard to the letter, but with an intellectual reverence and evangelical freedom they sought to imbibe and propagate the spirit. Petrus de Riga, of the church of Rheims, a scholastic and poet of the twelfth century, did not scruple to comprise the decalogue in four verses :

“ Sperne Deos, fugito perjuria, sabbata serva,
Sit tibi patris honor, sit tibi matris amor.

* Meditat. Vitæ Christi, cap. 48.

† Ludovic. Blosii Consolat. Pusillan. I.

‡ Richard S. Vict. de Eruditione Hominis Interioris, Lib. I. cap. 3.

Non sis occisor, fur, mœchus, testis iniquus :
Vicinisque thorum, resque caveto suas *."

Lines so little suspected by men of the middle ages of hidden mischief, that they are quoted as the decalogue by Robert de Sorbon, in his sermon on conscience.

In truth, there is nothing more striking in the whole moral history of those times, than the prodigious vitality which distinguished men in regard to justice. Far were they from imagining that negative merit in morals was sufficient for the fulfilment of that which was to assuage the soul's long thirst. St. Caesarius, of Arles, had especially addressed those who think it sufficient for eternal life, to avoid evil without wishing to do good, which discourse had become universally celebrated. "There is a certain race of men in the holy church," says Hugo de St. Victor, "to whom to believe, means only not to contradict faith, who live as they were born, not in loving or in approving that in which they were born; who, if they had been born elsewhere, would not have been of the faithful, for they hold faith through the custom of life, not from love; and there is another race of men more attentively considering the state of human life, and on that account beginning to fluctuate in faith since they behold many averse and alienated from faith, and yet who, being led by the piety of faith, from two doubtful things, choose that which they learned from the Christian doctrine; and there is another race of men, certain and confirmed in their faith, whom God confirms either by external miracles, or by internal inspiration †." During the middle ages, men who were in earnest in every thing, set their hearts on whatever their reason judged best; and said, in the expressive language of their romantic writers, "Le cuer fait l'homme et non mye le corps. Car le cuer est sire du corps et le corps est serf du cuer ‡." They possessed what an ancient disciple of the Stagyrite styles a certain depth and greatness of soul—*ἔχειν δέ τι βάθος τῆς ψυχῆς καὶ μέγεθος §.* In short, it was known that in every state all depended

* Bulæus Hist. Univers. Paris. Tom. II.

† Hugo de S. Vict. Eruditionis Theolog. ex Miscellan. Lib. I. tit. 18.

‡ Gyron le Courtois, f. CCXXXVIII.

§ De Virtut. et Vit.

upon what was the will. Indeed, St. Augustin says, “*Omnes nihil aliud quam voluntates sunt**.” And he illustrates this by citing the instance of the good and bad angels, of whom the nature is the same, the will different†. The inference is drawn by Dante :

—“ Hence thou must infer
That love is germin of each virtue in ye,
And of each act no less, that merits pain ‡.”

St. Thomas says, that every act of man is good and meritorious, or morally evil and demeritorious, according as it proceeds or not from the deliberation of reason. Indeed, not only as his disciple, the blessed doctor, shows this whole beatitude of the just, is eminently of choice, for as prudence is in the intellect, and the ten virtues of the Stagyrite in the sensitive appetite, so justice is in the will § ; but also St. Bernardine, of Sienna, shewed that each of the eight beatitudes implies and requires an intention, “for it is not said,” he remarks, “*beati qui tristantur*,” but “*beati qui lugent ||*. ” “ All can be just,” says Richard of St. Victor, “ if they perfectly wish to be just ¶.” And again he proceeds even further, “ *Sola enim justa velle est jam justum esse ***.” The answer of St. Thomas, the angel of the school, to his sister, who asked what she should do to be saved, was this, “ wish to be saved ! ” “ *O summam Dei Patris liberalitatem,*” exclaims Picus, of Mirandula, “ *summam et admirandam hominis felicitatem, cui datum id habere quod optat, id esse quod velit ††.* ” Such is the lesson conveyed to Dante by the spirit of Marco Lombardo :

“ Light have ye still to follow evil or good,
And of the will free power, which, if it stand
Firm and unwearied in heaven’s first assay,
Conquers at last, so it be cherish’d well,
Triumphant over all.”

* *De Civitate Dei*, Lib. XIV. 6.

† *Id. Lib. XII. 1.*

‡ *Purg. XVII.*

§ *Ægid. Rom. de Regim. II. 1. c. 3.*

|| *S. Bern. Senens. Tom. III. Serm. VII.*

¶ *Richardi S. Victor, de Præparatione animi ad Contemplationem, cap. 2.*

** *Id. De Contemplatione, Lib. III. 16.*

†† *Joan. Picus Mirandula de Hominum Dignitate.*

The Christian religion had, in fact, formalized and developed the great truth which was first disclosed in the Judaic traditions, that evil was voluntary and immaterial ; for in all the ancient systems of the East evil is represented as involuntary, and its action wholly material, synonymous with the concupiscence of nature. What was it, in fact, which imparted that moral grandeur which has surprised and delighted so many modern authors in the history of the middle ages, prompting the poet to exclaim :

“ In those old romantic days,
Mighty were the soul’s commandments
To support, restrain, or raise.
Foes might hang upon their path, snakes rustle near,
But nothing from their inward selves had they to fear *.”

And giving occasion to the historian’s remark, that even times of little learning as the fifth century in France, were nevertheless ages in which abounded men of great characters †. It is not that in former times the whole of nature was more living and spiritual than at present, but that there was a hearty desire and a decided will. The moral grandeur arose from the prevalence of that wish, which was the desire so beautifully expressed by Richard of St. Victor, “ to attain to that life in which no one dies, no one hungers, no one thirsts, no one fears an enemy, no one betrays a friend ‡.” “ For what else constitutes a character,” as Novalis remarks, “ but a perfectly formed will § ?” What is it that now prevents men otherwise free from attaining to that high intellectual sovereignty, possessed by so many members of the heavenly republic in the middle ages ? It is the fatalism introduced by the religious innovators of the sixteenth century. It is the opinion that man is but a passive instrument under grace ; for that was their main point. So that Erasmus, in his work *De Libero Arbitrio*, struck a blow which went to the very heart of Luther, as that

* Wordsworth.

† Staudenmaier Johan. *Scotus Erigena und die Wissenschaft Seiner Zeit.* I. 64.

‡ Richardi S. Vict. de Baptismo Christi.

§ Schriften. II. 284.

arch chieftain felt. "Who will deliver me from Erasmus?" was his cry. "May God take away Erasmus from me!" His anger against other men seemed, as Michelet remarked, rather an anger of good humour: he was red when he wrote against the Popes, but he grew pale when he replied to Erasmus. What is it which renders the institutions of catholicism, as they existed in the middle ages, so odious to the moderns, that the whole bent of their mind is now to sweep them from the earth? It is their own want of a fixed and decided will. This want alone renders hateful to them the monastic rule, the discipline of holy orders, and the inviolable character of the marriage state. These wavering reeds, so shaken by every wind, seem to fear the immutability which belongs essentially to whatever is Catholic; they would ask delay; they would have liberty to return; they may wish it to-day, but will they wish it to-morrow? Oh! these deliberate fools, how often, when they do choose, they have the wisdom by their wit to lose!

The spirit of the Catholic morality was wholly opposed to this practical fatalism, which is so characteristic of men at the present day, and which gives the true explanation why the language and conduct of many ingenious and learned persons are in contradiction with each other. The principle of their false security is combatted by St. Chrysostom, in his homilies upon Providence. God has said, "I have placed before you fire and water, life and death; stretch forth your hand: I leave you free to choose *." The demon, on the contrary, says, "It is not in your power to make a choice: necessity has pronounced for you: it is for you to submit." So we may hear it argued by some who say, you have been born under this discipline; your relations, your friends, have all professed it; all your duties in life require you to remain attached to it, at least externally. Your name is chooser, but you cannot choose. The Catholic religion may be true, but you have not been destined to embrace it, as is evident from the circumstance of your birth in a country where it is rejected. But if necessity exists, to resume the reasoning of St. Chrysostom, "there is no such thing as justice; if necessity exists, faith, religion, are only vain words, without any sense; if necessity exists,

* Eccl. xv. 17.

God does not exist; if necessity exists, there is no such thing as virtue, no such thing as crime; all our actions are indifferent; all our miseries inconsolable; praise, blame, shame, honesty, laws, all are but empty sound, signifying nothing *." "There is no essential cause for an evil will," says St. Augustin, "but only a deficient cause—the want of a right will, as in avarice, and luxury, and vain-glory, where there is merely a want of a just preference of what is infinitely more valuable, more beautiful, and more noble, than what is chosen †." The Gentile philosopher observed, that the fountain and head of miseries, and the root of all evils, was a conviction that no disease of the mind was voluntary, and a matter of opinion or choice ‡, the groundlessness of which, Virgil shows in those four words :

" Possunt, quia posse videntur §."

During the middle ages, the error which denies the freedom of the human will, nearly disappears; and it was reserved for the sophist of Geneva, in the sixteenth century, to exhibit to the world, in his own person, and not without occasional indications of the interior horror consequent on such a combination, a legist and a fatalist as a reformer of philosophy. The errors attributed to the unhappy Gottschalk, of Fulda, in the ninth century, may have partly arisen from the calamities of his own life, to which Staudenmaier, with great probability, ascribes them ||. No sooner had he disclosed his sentiments on predestination, while on a visit to Count Eberhard of Frioul, than the scandal spread far and near. Raban Maur, then Archbishop of Mayence, wrote immediately against them, summoned a synod in 848 to condemn them, called upon Hincmar, Archbishop of Rheims, his metropolitan, to take measures to prevent him from infusing such noxious doctrine into the minds of the Christian people, and exposed the practical and fatal evils that would result from such an opinion in a letter to that prelate, who, as far as the cause of truth was concerned, must be acknowledged to have written with

* Hom. V.

† De Civit. Dei, Lib. XII. 8, 9.

‡ Tuscul. IV.

§ Æneid. V. 231.

|| Johan. Scot. Erig. I. 175.

ability and justice *. Against the errors to which this question gave birth, Florus, the deacon, apologises for writing ; observing that, “they are easily disproved, with God’s assistance, and even shown worthy of laughter and scorn by the faithful, who are exercised in sacred reading, since they are most vain, and against faith, and full of manifest falsehood †.” The works of Prudentius, of Troyes, of Lupus, Abbot of Ferrieres, of Ratramnus, monk of Corby, and of Amolon, Archbishop of Lyons, originating in this controversy, were all distinguished by vast erudition and profound philosophy. Finally, the Catholic doctrine on free-will and the blood of Christ, shed for all men, was confirmed and decreed by Pope Nicholas the First, in the year 859. Even the philosophic writers of the fifteenth century most addicted to subtle speculations respecting faith, such as Cardan ‡, and Marsilius Ficinus, leave the will free ; the latter, besides composing a treatise in defence of free-will, declaring repeatedly in his letters that nothing is more voluntary than goodness §. In practice, we can only trace the contrary opinion in a few detached episodes, of which Torquemade, the Spaniard, furnishes an example in the following narrative : “One evening,” saith he, “as I was walking with some gentlemen in the fields, adjoining a certain great city of this kingdom, we saw in a valley three men preparing a wheel for the execution of some criminal, which was to take place on the following day. ‘There,’ said one of my companions, ‘is the executioner, a young man who it is said is a good grammarian, and of gentle manners.’ I was greatly astonished to hear this. So, upon coming to the place, I looked narrowly at the young man, who was of a pleasing mien, and seemed not more than twenty-one years of age. I asked him if he was the executioner, and he said that he was. I asked him in Latin if he had studied, and he replied with elegance, in the same language, that he had ; and I asked him of what country he was, and he replied, ‘Since you know me to be the executioner, you ought not to ask me my country.’ ‘But

* Hincmar de Praëdestin.

† Mauguin Vind. Præd. Tom. I. 585.

‡ Hieron. Card. de Libris Propriis.

|| Marsil. Ficin. Epist. Lib. I.

how then,' I continued, 'can you have undertaken such an office as this? Certainly, you are very guilty in this respect, since God has given you grace, and the disposition and ability to do good, and yet you do not employ his gifts as you ought.' After hearing me with attention, he replied, 'Sir, my fate would have it so: I cannot resist my fate.' Then perceiving his grand error and ignorance, I began a long discourse, and shewed him that there was no such thing as fate; that men had free-will, and might do what they chose, that they had no right to lay the blame on fate, but on themselves, when they chose an evil instead of a good way; in fine, he listened to me eagerly, and let fall a shower of tears to my great surprise; and he said, 'My misfortune has proceeded from my having had hitherto this bandage over my eyes. Since it is so, I will take another course, and not dishonour my family; for you must know, that I am of a noble family, and that I have been lost through gambling, which has reduced me to this state; but I give thanks to God, that no one hitherto has discovered me, for my country is far from here. I shall change my life, and endeavour to follow your good advice;' and as he never ceased to weep, he returned home with me to my house, and passed the whole night there in sighs and tears, and at break of day he departed, and I saw him no more; but from what I observed in him, I have great hopes that he did what he promised *.'

The writers of the middle ages generally treat the opinion of the fatalists as an error exploded, which the mere view of a sower who sows grain in the fields can disperse. "Among all the goods of creation," says Richard of St. Victor, "there is nothing more sublime, nothing more worthy, than free-will, according to which man is made in the image of God †." "In this," he says, "the rational creature has an excellent dignity, that he serves his Creator voluntarily, not from compulsion ‡." In fact, the whole discipline and philosophy of the Catholic Church depended upon this doctrine. Hear again Richard: "Man presumes to mitigate the anger of the omnipotent God, and prevails, when the sentence

* Hexameron, 354.

† Richardi S. Vict. de Statu Interioris Hominis I. 1. c. 3.

‡ Id. Super Apocalypsim. Lib. V. c. 9.

hath gone forth, and man offers himself to death, and imposes an end on necessity. To such a height of audacity does the consummation of charity exalt the mind of man. Behold how it makes man presume beyond man, by making him presume in God †.” The living morality of the Catholic states was opposed also to that systematic sloth under the mask of prudence and moderation, by which eventually the spirit of the obligation itself is sacrificed, notwithstanding the continued profession of respect for the duty which it was intended to enforce; for by always resting satisfied with keeping within the law, the limits are at length so encroached upon, that men may have passed beyond unawares, the little which was to be observed, being performed with indifference, and perhaps reduced to a mere nominal compliance, till by degrees all is renounced, all forgotten, and men relapse to the manners of a Gentile sensuality. Milton feelingly deplores the moral condition of his contemporaries, after the vital principle of catholicism had been lost. There were heard, indeed, on all sides, many pompous eulogies of virtue, and much boast of morality and reformation, but what was the fact? “Custom,” said he, “still is silently received for the best instructor; filling each estate of life and profession with abject and servile principles, depressing the high and heaven-born spirit of man far beneath the condition wherein either God created him, or sin hath sunk him.” Such was not the custom of the middle ages; no one feared the reproach of singularity or fanaticism, when realizing in his actions the type of moral grandeur, which was in his heart. The number was not then so great of those, who, as Cicero says of Pisa, crept to honours by the error of men, and by the recommendation of smoky images, which they resembled only in colour; but men, endued with faith, did oft attain in lowest poverty to highest deeds. Sloth was known as one of the seven sins that consign the soul to death; and sloth, according to the authors of the middle age, was a laziness of mind, neglecting to begin or prosecute good things. This, in fact, connected with the prodigious activity of the evil principle, is the great disease of our nature, to which the church alludes in that affecting reproach which she puts into the mouth of the

* De Gradibus Violentæ Charitatis.

divine Jesus, “*Una hora non potuistis vigilare mecum? Vel Judam non videtis, quoniam non dormit, sed festinat tradere me Iudeis?*” It is to rouse men from this apathy that the Catholic mysteries are intended, for while it predominates all hopes are vain; so great is its effect that the sacred Scripture says, in *imagine pertransit homo*. You may look upon us a thousand times, and you will never see us, rise up and walk. We are but poor painted images; we seem to wish every moment to rise and stand on our feet, but we do not rise or stand. All justice is outraged, the children of God are hunted down and slain like wolves, in order that a remorseless band may seize the asylums which faith had constructed for them. We are called upon to rise, that is, to raise a voice in their behalf—but we rise not, we sit in silence—in *imagine pertransit homo*.

It would be too far to venture from our path were I to point out how the course of human history bears witness to the decay of the vivifying principle of Catholic morals; but we can behold the effects displayed in a remarkable manner from any point, so that they will be visible if we only regard the material monuments on which I before treated, as having been the work of faith. For observe, it is in the sixteenth century that nearly all the great works of Christian zeal, as those of architecture, stop short. It is then that so many great undertakings are interrupted, to be no more resumed. The grandest cathedrals remain half finished, one with its choir only erected, another with merely its nave, others without a front or a spire, sublime fragments, at the sight of which one asks, how came to disappear, all of a sudden, this giant race of masons and sculptors? How came there to be no more great foundations for the spiritual and material wants of society? It is that faith then grew weak; men began to protest and to doubt: to have no longer a perfectly-formed will, to have no strength to begin or to prosecute good things; or in other words, it was then that the custom of which Milton spoke, became fixed and naturalized among the races of men that had been for so many centuries before in honour, and with an intimate conviction of their dignity. And who, therefore, now can trace any spirit of life within the vast organization of the ancient society, where the principle of its existence has been withdrawn? On the seats of their ancestors the

moderns appear, like the Roman college of Augurs in the time of Dionysius, who describes them as so cleaving to the ancient form, that when magistrates were to be elected, the candidates, having prayed in the open air at dawn of day, some one of the augurs used to declare that there was lightning on the left hand, though none appeared, and adding, that this confirmed the election *. During the middle ages, these dry bones that we see around were living, for into all the institutions and manners of catholicism, there was infused a spirit, and no such dead empty forms, phantoms, without nerves or flesh, were ever beheld in a Christian state.

We have seen that the Catholic morality, synonymous with a determined will, depended for its strength and influence upon grace; it remains only to observe what was its principle and motive.

St. Augustin says, that men begin often by only fearing eternal punishment, and so abstaining from sin. “Timent quidem,” he continues, “sed non amant justitiam, cum autem per timorem continent se a peccato fit consuetudo justitiae, et incipit quod durum erat amari, et dulcescit Deus †.” This is the state of initial love. Servile servile fear, according to theologians, was what restrains a man from sin who retains the wish to sin, if eternal punishment were not awarded against sin. This fear was held to be an additional sin; but servile fear, recommended by Christ, is that of a man restrained by fear, who does not speculate what he would do if there were no punishment for sin. This fear is called by St. Ambrose “the key of a fluctuating soul,” and by St. Gregory, “an anchor of the mind.” The spirit of the middle ages harmonized with the condescension of Divine justice; but it rose above the limits which were prescribed. “The compunction of fear has bitterness,” says Richard of St. Victor, “the compunction of love sweetness; he who is only affected by fear, feeds, indeed, on spiritual, though not on sweet food; but he who from the desire of eternal joy, pours forth tears, is refreshed with food both sweet and spiritual ‡.” The angel struck Peter, saying, “surge velociter,” and the chains fell from

* Dion. Halicarnass. Antiquit. Roman. Lib. II. cap. 6.

† In Ps. cxxvii.

‡ Richardi S. Vict. de Contemplatione, II. 17.

his hands, without any effort or violence. "The cause," says Nieremberg, "was because the light shone upon him; for he who is enlightened by the light of truth, has no occasion to offer violence to himself to conquer his evil passions. Sweet is this mode of victory by the practical knowledge of truth *." As Richard of St. Victor says, "love generates knowledge, and puts an end to sins, through a fear of offending him who is its object †." But this chapter has already exceeded the due limits. Let us hear the conclusion which Novalis, a disciple of the moderns, drew from a survey of the whole subject, and then we may pass on. "Practical, living Christianity," says this profound thinker, "was the old Catholic faith, which was a belief in Christ, in his mother, and in the saints. Its constant presence in life, its love for art, its deep humanity, the indissolubleness of its marriage, its benevolent communicativeness, its joy in humility, obedience and truth, attest clearly and indubitably the existence of the genuine spirit of religion ‡." A remarkable testimony, that at any period might well claim the deep attention of all who wandered with its author from the way of authority, but which assumes a still greater degree of interest when we observe that now, after men have had an interval of more than three hundred years for constructing a different system, the standard work upon morals of the nation which is looked up to as the most enlightened upon earth, is pronounced by judges of the highest capacity to rest upon a defective principle, and to be mischievous in its practical consequences. "I think," says an illustrious professor, in his discourse on the studies of the university in which that work is received as classical, and which justly boasts of him as its brightest ornament, "that to reject the moral sense is to destroy the foundation of all moral philosophy: that the rule of expediency, as stated by Paley, is based in false reasoning on the attributes of God; that the rule itself is ill suited to the capacity of men; that it is opposed to the true spirit of the Christian religion; that however honestly it may be accepted, it tends inevitably to lower the standard of what is right and good; and lastly, that

* P. Nieremberg, Doct. Ascet. Lib. II. 6. 39.

† Richardi S. Vict. in Cantica Canticorum, c 41.

‡ Schriften. II. 333.

wherever the utilitarian system is carried, through the influence of popular writings into practical effect, it will be found to end in results most pestilent to the honour and happiness of man *.”

CHAPTER XII.

THE objection to the morality of the Catholic church, on the supposed ground of its incompatibility with the doctrine of a divine atonement, has played too great a part in history to be passed over in silence; though otherwise as philosophers, men would have but little to say respecting it, philosophers not having to reason against phantoms; but, as an historian of the middle ages, one cannot omit examining an objection which involves not merely a prodigious error, but also a flagrant misrepresentation of past times. If here again I should seem to enter far upon theological ground, the reader cannot, with reason, consider me as a trespasser, for the question of grace involves the whole history of the sixteenth century. If an historian can be only a geographer in some ages, in others he must be a theologian. It has been justly remarked by Michelet, that Robertson’s history is the most obscure and unsatisfactory of all books, precisely because events are not presented in it from this elevated point of view; for without investigating the theological question, it is impossible to understand the events of that time, whereas the great work on the variations by Bossuet, may be justly considered as being, perhaps, the very best history in the French language.

“ Domine, memorabor justitiae tuæ solius.” You find in these words, reader, no contradiction to the line of argument hitherto pursued in this review of history; for you are aware that in commemorating the deeds of just men during ages of faith, we have but recorded and magnified, as the language of those times proclaimed, the acts of God. “ Man has nothing but what he has received,”

* Sedgwick’s Discourse on the Studies of the University, p. 80.
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to use the words of Richard of St. Victor, “and he can do nothing unless by him from whom he received it. Some things, indeed, he can do by nature, and some by grace ; for the goods of nature are one thing, and those of grace are another. Nevertheless, it is certain that both are of grace, for nature itself is of grace : the first, therefore, are goods from grace preceding, and the second are goods from subsequent grace *.” This was an early lesson given to men. “ Nullus apud te per se innocens,” said Moses †, and the words of Job expressed a traditionary as well as a personal wisdom, when he said that no man is justified before God. “ Nay, whoever compares himself to the Author of good,” says Pope St. Gregory the great, in his morals, commenting upon Job’s words, “ deprives himself of the good which he had received, for he who arrogates to himself the good which he hath received, fights against God with his own gifts ; therefore he who liftest himself up is justly destroyed ‡.” That God of sovereign grace was pleased to impart his gifts to the redeemed race, and then to crown them, was indeed of faith, if so evident a truth could be so termed. “ Qui creavit te sine te, non justificabit te sine te,” was the saying of St. Augustin. St. Paul said that he had fought the good fight, and that thenceforth there was a crown laid up for him, which was a consummation sought by all who heard the church, the ground of whose hope is thus stated by Dante—

—“ For do not doubt
But to receive the grace which heaven vouchsafes
Is meritorious, even as the soul
With prompt affection welcometh the guest §.”

“ Are there no merits of the just ?” asks St. Augustin. “ There are certainly,” he replies, “ because they are just ; but that they should become just there were no merits ||.” The religious innovators affirmed, that they had restored to men the knowledge of justification and atonement, but nothing could surpass the extravagance of such an assertion, though many of them certainly made it in sincerity ;—strange and wholly inexplicable delusion, which must be referred to some unsearchable counsels of

* Richardi S. Vict. de Statu Interioris Hominis, I. 20.

† Exod. xxxiv. ‡ S. Greg. Moral. Lib. IX. cap. 2.

§ Parad. XXIX. || S. August. Epist. CV. ad Sextum.

Divine Providence ! The whole history and philosophy of the Catholic church, proclaim that upon that doctrine the human race had been established uninterruptedly from the first dawn of the blessed light which had announced to sinners the mystery of their redemption. It will be better not to treat this subject with a view to the dogmatical errors of those who separated themselves—such works as Mohler's *Symbolik* are at every one's command—but merely to show the constant tenor of Catholic instruction respecting it ; although an historian cannot be dispensed from briefly alluding to them, in order to show how heresy played the unwitting handmaid to those who entered through the breach of Christendom, to use the expression of Æschylus, with an atheist foot : *ἀθέω ποδὶ* *, beholding in dismay the fearful desolation, though still obstinate in its alliance. The change was full of terror for all, but rebellious men preferred it to a palinode. “Lord, doctor,” said Luther’s wife, on one occasion, “how comes it that under the papacy men used to pray so fervently and long, whereas now they pray so seldom and with such coldness ?” “Doubtless,” replied her husband, “the demon prompted them to practise religion, in order that they might trust in their works.” Burton, after describing the hardheartedness of his contemporaries, and their insensibility to the sufferings of the poor, proceeds thus : “Tell the rich man that the poor are starving, remind him that they are his brethren ; he passes on his way : if thou canst thunder upon him as papists do with satisfactory and meritorious works, or persuade him by these means he shall save his soul out of hell, and free it from purgatory, then, in all likelihood, he will listen and stay †.” Nothing could restrain their reckless deduction of consequences from the doctrine of their teachers. “In this age,” says Fuller, “we begin to think meanly of the Lord’s Prayer. Some will not forgive it for that passage ‘as we forgive them that trespass against us.’” The insane opinions, the truly factious opposition, to use a modern phrase of these men, introduced, it is true, infinite disorder into the social state, which our ancestors had abundant reason to deplore for their own sakes, for their country’s peace, and for the cause of God’s honour ; but though Luther and his peers had the

* Eumenid. 540.

† Book III.

presumption to deny the merit of good works, which error formed the fatal breach, the deposit of faith was too securely guarded to admit of Catholics, “on that account, flying to the opposite extreme, so as to refrain from relying for salvation on the merits of Christ, as all just men had done before them*.” The theological question, purely such, was indeed for ever set at rest by the celebrated canon of the council of Trent on justification, as it had been dogmatically determined long before by the successive decrees promulgated in different ages, which may be seen in the collection made by Ives de Chartres †. To determine it, however, in relation to history, which is the point that concerns us, let us hear the great voice of Catholic tradition, transmitted through the writings of the fathers, of the scholastic and mystic authors of the middle ages, and through the liturgy and offices of the church. Who could estimate the depths of the mysteries of faith ! They taught that there are spirits and intelligences for ever lost, and left without redemption : that there are others of human kind, to whom not only redemption is possible, but even a degree of glory promised beyond what they would have enjoyed if they had never fallen. The Master of the Sentences supposes that as Satan had sinned without any temptation or seducer from without, therefore his sin was irremediable ; but that, as the sin of man was, as it were, occasioned by another, so by another he hath a remedy ‡. Of this whole subject it was deemed enough to say, in the words of St. Augustin, respecting original sin, than this “ *nihil est ad prædicandum notius, nihil ad intelligendum secretius* §.”

“ From the beginning of the world,” says Hugo of St. Victor, “ there were Christians, if not in name, in fact. There are three kinds of men—men of the natural law, men of the written law, and men of grace. From the beginning till the end of the world, there will never have been any one justified unless by grace, and grace will never have been gained unless by Christ ||.”

* Principles of the Christian Religion, by the Rev. Lewis Brittain, regent of the English college at Bornhem.

† Iponis Carnotens. Decret. Pars XVII.

‡ Lib. II. Distinct. 21.

§ De Moribus Eccles. Cath. cap. 22.

|| Hugo de St. Vict. de Sacramentis Lib. I. Pars VII.

You have heard the theologian, now hear the poet of the middle ages ; he speaks of paradise and says,

“ None ever hath ascended to this realm,
Who hath not a believer been in Christ,
Either before or after the blest limbs
Were nailed upon the wood. But lo ! of those
Who call Christ, Christ, there shall be many found
In judgment, farther off from him by far
Than such to whom his name was never known *.”

All this is expressed in sublime brevity by the author of the *Quadrirégio*, describing Christ's descent into Limbo, when he says,

— “ As down the cavern streamed
The radiance : “ Light,” said Adam, “ this, that breathed
First on me, thou art come, expected Lord !”

Let us, finally, hear the preacher of the fifth age, whom some suppose to be St. Cæsarius, announcing the same doctrine on Easter Sunday. “ Behold, you have heard what our defender the Lord of vengeance hath done of his own accord. When like a conqueror, brilliant and terrible, he entered the regions of the kingdom of darkness, at his sight, the impious legions of hell, terrified and trembling, began to inquire of each other, saying, ‘ Who is this fearful comer, resplendent with the whiteness of snow ? Our Tartarus hath never beheld his fellow. The world hath never vomited into our cavern any one like him. It is an invader, not a debtor. He requires, he demands not ; we behold a judge, not a suppliant. He cometh to order, not to obey ; to plunder, not to remain. Did our warders sleep, when this conqueror attacked our gates ? If he were a sinner, he would not be so powerful ; if any impurity attached to him, he would not lighten our hell with such a lustre. If he be God, wherefore is he come ? If man, how did he dare to come ? If God, what doth he in the grave ? If man, why doth he deliver sinners ? Whence comes he, so bright, so strong, so wondrous, so terrible ? Who is he to have passed our frontiers with such intrepidity, and not only to fear not our punishment, but to deliver others from our chains ? May it not be him of whom our prince hath lately said, that by his death we should receive the

empire of the world? But if it be him, the hope of our prince has been frustrated; where he thought to conquer he hath been conquered and overthrown. O, our prince! what hast thou done, what hast thou wished to do? Behold him, who with a light supreme hath dissipated thy darkness! burst thy dungeons, broken thy chains, delivered thy captives, and changed their mourning into joy! See how those who were accustomed to groan beneath our torments, now insult us on account of the salvation which they have received; and not only no longer fear us, but threaten us! Who hath ever before seen the dead triumphing and the captives filled with joy?" "

"Fundamentum est justitiae fides," says St. Ambrose*; and St Augustin expresses the doctrine of the church thus, "Christ was made sin that we might become justice, not having our own justice but that which comes from God, not in ourselves but in Christ†." As it was, however, chiefly against the doctrine and practice of the middle ages that the objection was directed, let us pass on at once, without multiplying sentences from the holy fathers, to the testimony of a later time. Hear, then, an ascetic author of universal renown, during the ages so vehemently accused. "Domine Deus meus," cries Thomas à Kempis, "in misericordia tua stant omnia opera mea: et nulla sunt propria merita, nisi adsit tua pietas et miseratio immensa. Et hæc est spes mea, et tota fiducia mea‡." Again, hear Lewis of Grenada, the celebrated Spanish Dominican. "The merit of the blessed John the Evangelist," saith he, "was certainly great and eminent; but in the greatest gifts of God, it is safest to refer all things to his immense grace, from which every benefit flows§."

"You should understand," he says, in his discourse on the invention of the holy cross, "that all the gifts of grace, and all the unction of the Holy Spirit, are conferred upon us for the sake and merits of our crucified Lord. He vouchsafes us the grace by which we rise from sin; therefore, if we rise from sin, we rise by his merits. If we retain justice unto the end, we retain it by his merits. If we overcome the temptations of the ancient

* Lib. Off. I. c. 28.

† Enchiridion, c. 13.

‡ Thom. à Kemp. Soliloquium, cap. 7.

§ Ludovic. Grenatens. In Festo B. Joan. Evang. Concio III.

enemy, we overcome by his merits. If we perform any good work, we perform it by his merits. If we are kindled by a pious desire, we are kindled by his merits. If we are not shaken by any thunder of adverse things, nor puffed up by prosperity, it is owing to his merits. This Cross made the apostles conquerors of the world, strengthened the martyrs in their trials, instructed confessors with celestial precepts, illuminated doctors, constituted the purity of virgins, filled the desert with choirs of monks, and renewed the perishing world. This was the wisdom of the little ones, the light of those that sat in darkness, the strength of the combatants, and the crown of those that conquered*.”

Hear now Lewis of Blois. “Let every one, when about to die, trust in the merits of our Saviour Jesus Christ rather than in his own. Let him confide in His goodness, and in the prayers of the blessed Virgin Mary, and in the saints and elect of God. Let him propose to himself the bitter passion and death of Christ. Let him call to memory that ineffable charity which impelled him to sustain such unworthy things. Let him lose and submerge himself, with all his sins and negligences, in the profound sea of his immense mercy; and from pure love, with a perfect resignation, offer himself to the glory of God as a living host to the Lord†.”

That all hope of salvation was to be placed in the merits of Christ, is shown in his canon of the spiritual life‡. “All our works and exercises,” he says, in another work, “must be offered to God, by his only son, to the eternal praise of his name; for things which are of themselves obscure or less bright, acquire an ineffable splendour and beauty from the merits of Christ, with which they are joined and united§.”

St. Catherine of Sienna shows that no human works can either satisfy for sin or deserve reward, without the affection of charity, and the application of the blood of Christ. “Knowest thou not, O daughter, that all the pains which the soul can sustain in this life, are not sufficient to punish the least fault, since an offence against the infinite good, requires an infinite satisfaction; and,

* Ludovic. Grenatens. In Inventione Crucis. Concio I.

† Ludovic. Blos. Consol. Pusillan. ‡ Cap. 37.

§ Ludovic. Blos. Enchirid. Parvulorum, Lib. I. Doc. III. ap. 9.

therefore, not all the sufferings in this world are satisfactory but corrective. Nevertheless, true contrition is satisfactory, by means not of the suffering but of the infinite desire; and, therefore, the works of penance, though finite and done in time, may have an infinite merit, where the virtue was performed with infinite desire, and the penalty endured with true contrition*. ” This most holy contemplatist ascribes the knowledge of Jesus Christ in the soul, to its having been previously washed in his precious blood†.”

Henry Suso says, “ Others may console themselves in the innocence of their lives, or in their great exercises and labours, but I have all my hope and consolation placed and laid up in the passion of Jesus Christ, in his satisfaction, and expiation, and merits‡.” John Lanspergius, the Carthusian, leaves us to infer that this doctrine was universally accepted, for he begins with “ Since one drop of the blood of Christ has more value and satisfaction than all human merits§.”

“ It is with a perpetual thirst,” says St. Bernardine of Sienna, “ that we must do justice, which implies that we are never sufficiently just. The just man never says it is enough, but always esteems himself an unprofitable servant. The prophet saith, ‘ Sperantem in Domino misericordia circumdabit;’ he does not say, hoping in his merits, but hoping in the Lord||.”

“ How happy,” cries father John de Avila, the celebrated Spanish preacher, “ is the man who founds his all upon Jesus Christ, living to him and for him¶.” “ Remember,” he says, writing to a certain nobleman, “ that the confidence and consolation of Christians who wished to be saved, must not be founded on their own strength or on their own works only, but on the grace which is given to us in the works and merits of Jesus Christ; who by his infinite goodness, has willed to communicate them to all who by faith and penitence are subject to him; and this it is which alone can give us assurance and peace**.” “ The Son of God,” says Dom Calmet, “ is the surety and the mediator of all the alliances between God and

* S. Cath. Senensis Dialog. Tract. I. cap. 3.

† Id. cap. 4.

‡ Ludovic. Blos. Consolat. Pusil. § Id.

|| S. Ber. Senens. Tom. III. de Beat.

¶ Epist. Part II. 13. ** Id. II. Epist. 52.

men. They are only made in view and in virtue of the great and divine alliance which he has made with our nature in his incarnation*.”

The testimony of the more ancient writers is no less express and concurrent. “It is by Jesus Christ,” says the Angel of the School, “that heavenly gifts and graces come to us from God: it is by Jesus Christ that we should render him our thanksgiving, in order that he may be in all things and by all things mediator between God and man.” The writings of St. Bernard and of Pope Innocent the Second addressed to Abaillard, are equally explicit, reminding men, as the author of the *Imitation of Christ* says, that they should never think themselves to be of any merit on account of good works†. “What ought a Christian to study and to know, unless that in which consists all his good, all his treasure, and all his riches? What is this treasure of man, unless his merit? ‘Ergo, postquam in morte Christi est omne meritum hominis, sequitur quod totus thesaurus hominis est in morte Christi. Qui vult ergo in se habere omnem virtutem et omne meritum et omne bonum, recipiat in se Christi mortem et passionem, et portet eam in se, et incorporet eam sibi.’” These are the words of Raimund de Sabundus in his *Natural Theology*, cited by Cardinal Bona, as containing the proper subject of daily meditation at the office of Nones‡.

“I live in the faith of the Son of God, ‘qui dilexit me et tradidit semet ipsum pro me,’” are the words of the apostle, from which an ancient ascetic concludes that every man should regard the cross of Jesus, as if there had been no one else in the world but himself who had sinned, and that he had died for him alone§. “It is on the death of Jesus Christ that all my hopes are founded,” says the unknown writer of the middle ages, who composed the manual ascribed to St. Augustin. “The death of Jesus Christ is my refuge and the source of my merits||.” Speaking of the perfection of the graces of Christ, St. Bonaventura says, “This fulness of grace as from the head flows down into all who approach to him by a right faith, or by the sacraments of faith, whether

* Calmet sur le v. 13. du Chap. IX. de la Genèse.

† De Imit. Lib. III. c. 4. ‡ De Divin. Psal. excvii.

§ P. Joan. à Jesu Maria, Instruct. Novitiorum, III. cap. 2.

|| Manuel. cap. 22.

they preceded his advent or followed after it: Christ having in himself the superabundance of grace, bestows the benefit of this grace upon those who come to him*. "The mystery of our justification," he says elsewhere, "is signified in the work of the fourth day of the Creation, in which God made the sun and the moon, and the stars; for in the work of justification, we see the stars of virtue shining in the heart of the justified, which derive their light from the sun of justice†." "Have this for a general rule," he says, "whenever you wish to render God propitious to you, carry in your heart the wounds of Christ, and present yourself to the Eternal Father as if sprinkled with the blood of his only Son, and he will have mercy on you‡." Mark now how this doctrine was carried into practical effect. St. John of the Cross was a celestial man, who appeared on the earth like an incarnate seraphim; he performed actions of a perfect disinterestedness, and of an almost consummate holiness. Nevertheless he refused to recognize one action of his life which did not give him cause for fear§. When dying, in the convent of Ubede, the father provincial, seeking to console him by reminding him of his great services to religion, the holy man replied, "I pray your reverence to speak of nothing but my sins, for I recal them now to mind, and I know that I have nothing to offer for their satisfaction but the merits of Jesus Christ ||."

To cut short this present debate, the objectors can be securely challenged to produce the life of one saint of the Catholic Church, of whom it is not even expressly recorded, when any details are to be expected, as it is of the venerable mother De Chantal, foundress of the order of the Visitation, that all their hope was founded upon the infinite mercy of God, and on the merits of Jesus Christ¶. Justinian Bergomao was a holy hermit of Camaldoli, who from the desert wrote against Martin Luther. So dear to him were the lives of the fathers, that he used to express his wish that the volume which contained them might be buried with him in his grave. When dying,

* S. Bonavent. Centiloquii, Pars III. §. 28.

† De Reformat. Hom. Exter. cap. 64.

‡ S. Bonavent. Stim. Div. Amor. Pars III. 12.

§ Dosithée, Vie de S. Jean de la Croix, Liv. VI.

|| Id. Liv. VIII.

¶ Marsollier, Vie de Madame de Chantal, Lib. II. p. 220. 354.

he was exhorted, by some who stood near, to take courage, to whom he answered, "Fathers, though not trusting in my own merits, but in the mercy of the Most High, be assured that I expect death as a virgin awaits her spouse*." But even if we were left in ignorance of what these men believed and performed, if we knew nothing of their lives or of their deaths, still no other conclusion is possible as to the historical fact, after we have heard the prayers of the church and observed the principle of all her mysteries. In the treatise on the mass by Cardinal Bona, you will see how the mind of the priest is wholly bent upon the desire of being immersed in the abyss of the merits of Christ†. Those who assisted at the Eucharistic sacrifice, and those who offered it up to the Eternal Father, knew from the Church that, as Cardinal Bona says, no disposition of theirs, no industry, no virtue, but alone the grace of God, rendered them worthy‡. "The church knows," says Pope Benedict the Fourteenth, in his treatise *De Sacrificio Missæ*§, explaining the words of the daily prayer, "non meritorum inspector, sed veniæ largitor," that God vouchsafes beatitude only through interceding merits, and that grace and pardon of sins are necessary for all who are admitted into the company of the saints, which without our meriting, are given only by Christ our Lord, our own merits being nothing but the gift of God's mercy and grace." If the church invites her children to perform the works of penance, it is her prayer that "as they depend solely on the hope of heavenly grace, they may be defended by heavenly protection||." If she commemorates their having received the gifts of the Holy Ghost, it is her prayer that "God would mercifully accomplish what he has granted to them, without any merit on their side¶." If she hails the coming of the Just One, she beseeches God to be appeased by the prayers and victims of their humility, and since they have no merits to plead, to assist them by his protection through their Lord Jesus Christ**. At the

* *Annales Camaldulens. Lib. LXXIII.*

† *De Missa Tractat. Ascet. c. V. 7.*

‡ *Id. cap. 2, 3.*

§ I. 301.

|| *Coll. Sabbat. II. Hebd. Lent.*

¶ *Secret. Twenty-third Sund. after Pentecost.*

** *Secret. Second Sund. in Advent.*

end of every prayer she adds, that it is offered through Christ. "Non enim," as Durandus saith, explaining this usage, "per aliam viam ad nos æterna Dei beneficia possunt decurrere, quam per eum qui est Mediator Dei et hominum, homo Christus Jesus *."

In the very offices which are accused of militating against this tradition of faith, she finds occasion to express how deeply it has influenced her views of the divine law; for if she wishes men to believe according to the judgment of the subtle Scot, who deserved and obtained that title for his profound argument on that very question, that the soul of the blessed virgin, at the first instant of its creation and infusion into her body, was preserved from the stain of original sin, her doctors teach that this was through the special grace and privilege of God, by the intuition of the merits of Jesus Christ †. Finally, in commemorating the passion of the holy martyrs, she holds that their intercession and merits can only avail through the mystery of Christ's atonement, as may be witnessed in what she sings on the festival of S. Clement, Pope, and martyr.—*Non meis meritis ad vos me misit Dominus, vestris coronis participem fieri.* The religious institutions also of the middle age, not only implied the acceptance of this doctrine, but were wholly and expressly dependant on it. The life of monks could have had no beginning if the sacrifice on Calvary had not been consummated. "Whoever aspires to the monastic life," says Albert the Great, "must, as if with closed eyes and senses, refrain from entangling and disturbing himself with any creature; he must retire wholly into himself, and regard no other object but only Jesus Christ wounded ‡." To the testimony of holy theologians, thus borne out by the language of the church, and the object of her institutions, the evidence of history, however, is not confined. It shows further, how the general sense of the people, and the belief of the laity, corresponded with the doctrine, which had been divinely transmitted to them. Lo! what is this goodly train which passes before us? Who is this that rides in such state, armed, though in times of peace, in complete steel, having at his saddle bow a helmet, and

* Durandi Rationale, cap. 15. Lib. IV.

† Sardagna Theologia, Tom. IV 64.

‡ Albert. Mag, de adhærendo Deo, cap. 2.

over his mail a coat, presenting before and behind a great cross, on which is written, O how merciful is God ! followed by a stately company, all of whom bear crosses similarly embroidered ? This is the just and wise Emperor Sigismond, whose zeal for the peace of the church has prompted him to enter France *. You perceive how this divine mystery is brought to your recollection, even amidst the pomp of secular triumphs.

In the instructions which were particularly addressed to the laity, we invariably find the utmost attention evinced to impress it upon them. Thus Iona lays down the fundamental principle of salvation through the atonement of Jesus Christ at the beginning of his work, *De Institutione Laicali*, which was dedicated to the count Malfredus, who was one of the first nobles of Gaul under the emperor Charles the Bald †.

Among St. Anselm's questions to be proposed to a dying man we read as follows If it be a layman, the question is, " Do you hope and believe that you may come to eternal salvation, not by your merits, but by the merits of the passion of Jesus Christ?"—Answer, Such is my hope If it be a monk, you are to ask him, " Credis quod Dominus Jesus Christus pro te mortuus est ? Credo. Credis te non posse nisi per mortem ipsius salvare ? Credo. Age ergo dum superest in te anima : in hac sola morte totam fiduciam tuam constitue : in nulla alia tu fiduciam habeas : huic morti te totum committe, hac solâ te totum contege : hac morte te totum involve : et si Dominus Deus voluerit te judicare, dic : Domine, mortem Domini nostri Jesu Christi objicio inter me et judicium tuum ; aliter non contendo tecum ‡." Thus speaks the father of the scholastic theology. Again, to history belongs the evidence which can be collected from such ancient documents as the testament of Margaret of Lorraine, wife of René, duke of Alençon. In this, after declaring that she recommends her soul to God her Creator and Redeemer, and to his blessed mother, to St. Michael, and to all the saints of Paradise, she adds, " in order that by the merit of the very dolorous passion of my Creator, and the prayers of the blessed Virgin Mary,

* Paravin, *Hist. de Lyon.* Lib. II. 92.

† Ionaë Aurelianens. *Episcop. de Instit. Laïcali*, Lib. I. cap. 1.

‡ S. Anselmi Admonitio Morienti.

and of all the blessed saints, I may live and die in the holy Catholic faith, and in the love and charity of God, my Saviour and Redeemer Jesus, in whom is my whole and final hope, and on whom depends the beginning and the end of all regular observance *.” Similar evidence does history supply in recording the last words of king John of Arragon, in the year 1479. “ He gazed upon the crucifix and said, ‘ O Creator of the world, omnipotent God, redeemer of men, spare me thy most unworthy servant. Mercy, O most clement Jesus, and turn away thy face from my sins, moved not by my merits, which, O Lord, are none, but by thy ineffable piety and infinite mercy †.’ ”

The celebrated countess Mathilda expired with similar words.

“ In cruce nam Christi sua figens oscula dixit :
 Te colui semper, mea nunc rogo crimina terge.
 Accipiens Christi Corpus venerabile dixit ;
 Semper dum vixi, Deus, hoc scis, spem tibi fixi,
 Nunc in fine meo me salvans suscipe, quæso.”

Such was her confession ; while the words of Donizo, her chaplain, after relating it, show how far were the wise and holy men of those days from expressing that presumptuous confidence which is now on every tongue when it is a question of a soul departing ; for he adds,

“ Sic orans migrat mox hæc sapiens Comitissa :
 Quanquam credamus, Deus huic quoque sit miseratus.
 Ipsum nemo tamen scit, qui non postulet alte
 Ut sibi concedat Paradisi gaudia vera ‡.”

Reader, I am well pleased to have reserved for this place the letter of Angelo Politian to James Antiquarius, in which he relates the death of Lorenzo de Medicis ; for though we reviewed in a former book the character of death in relation to blessed sorrow, the last words and actions of that great man were so imbued with the spirit of this divine doctrine, that the claim of the present argument to possess their evidence seems to outweigh every other. “ Finding the moments critical, Lorenzo,” saith he, “ as a man always most cautious, had, as you may

* Dacher. Spicilegium, Tom. V.

† Lucii Marinei Siculi de Rebus Hispaniæ, Lib. XVIII.

‡ Vita Mathild. Lib. II.

suppose, nothing more at heart than to send for the physician of souls, to whom he confessed, according to the Christian rite, all the faults of his life. I heard a person who was present say, that he never beheld any thing more incredible than the constancy of the man at his death, than the imperturbable serenity with which he called to mind the past, dispensed the present, and provided for the future. About midnight he was told that the priest was coming with the sacrament. ‘Far be it from me,’ he cried, ‘far be it from me to suffer that my Jesus, who made me and redeemed me, should enter this bed-chamber. Raise me up, I implore you, raise me up, that I may be carried forth to meet my Lord;’ and so raising himself up as well as he could, and sustaining the weakness of his body by the force of his mind, between the arms of his servants he was borne into the hall, where sinking down on his knees and weeping, he spoke these words: ‘Dost thou deign, O mild Jesu, to visit this thy most wicked servant: what do I say, servant? Nay, rather thy enemy, and indeed thy most ungrateful enemy, who hast so often offended thy majesty, notwithstanding so many benefits conferred upon him. O by that charity with which thou dost embrace the whole race of men, through which thou didst come down on earth, taking upon thyself our humanity; by that charity which compelled thee to suffer hunger and thirst, and cold, and heat, and labour, and scoffings, and contumely, and stripes and blows, and lastly, death and the cross; by that charity I implore thee, O Jesu, to turn away thy face from my sins, that when I shall stand before thy tribunal, to which I now feel myself cited, not my sins, but the merits of thy cross may be recompensed. O may thy most precious blood, good Jesu, prevail in my cause, which thou didst shed to restore men to liberty upon that altar of our redemption.’ After these words, which he pronounced weeping, while all that were present wept, the priest ordered him to be raised and placed upon his bed, that he might administer to him more conveniently, which he for a while refused to suffer, but in the end, rather than appear disobedient to his senior, he permitted it to be done, and then after similar words, he received the body and blood of the Lord. After a while he began to console his son Peter, who alone continued present, and gave him, as I heard, sage advice, and all that he

said was full of singular wisdom and holiness. When I entered the room, he stretched out his feeble arms, saying, ‘Ah, my Angelo;’ then he caught and pressed closely both my hands. I endeavoured at first, turning my head aside, to conceal my tears and sobs, but finding it impossible, I threw myself into a recess of the chamber and gave the reins to my sorrow. I soon, however, resumed strength and returned, when he asked me where was John Picus of Mirandula? and I replied, that he had remained in the city fearing lest his presence should be troublesome; ‘and,’ said he, ‘I ought to fear lest it might trouble him to come so far, and yet I would fain see and speak with him before I die.’ So I sent messengers, and he came immediately. O good God, with what humanity, with what blandishments did he receive him! He asked his pardon for having sent for him, and told him that he did so through love, for that with his face, as with that of a most dear friend, he desired to satiate his dying eyes. Then for some time he conversed familiarly, and even playfully, with us, saying that he wished he could have finished his library. When Jerome, the holy friar and preacher of celestial doctrine, entered and exhorted him to hold the faith, he replied, that he held it entire. As he was leaving the room, Lorenzo said, ‘Stay, father, your benediction first;’ and then with head bowed down, and a countenance full of religion, he received it. He repeated the responses with such composure, that you would suppose it was the others and not Lorenzo who approached death. Such evenness of mind did he evince to the last, that when some one offering food, asked him how he liked it, ‘as a dying man,’ was his reply. Finally, embracing all with affection, and asking pardon of each if he had ever spoken a harsh word to him during the pain of his sickness, he desired them to recite the prayers for the recommendation of a soul. At the Gospel relating the passion of Christ he repeated the words, at one time silently moving his lips, and at another raising up his weak eyes, and sometimes making signs with his fingers to express what he felt. At last the silver crucifix, magnificently adorned with gems and pearls, being placed before his eyes, looking on it and kissing it, he expired; a man born to the highest state, and who amidst the gusts and tides of fluctuating fortune, showed himself so moderate that it

would be difficult to say, whether in prosperity he appeared more just, or in adversity more magnanimous. Of intelligence so acute and profound that he seemed to excel equally in all things, and of virtue so eminent that probity, justice, and faith, seem in the estimation of all men, to have chosen his breast for their dwelling-place and for their temple *."

Here is an admirable narrative, reader, but it only supplies an instance of the effects of the Catholic doctrine of justification, and we may recollect that all the examples of holy death in the middle ages recorded in a former book were similar. If we pass to the writings of the learned men who were most distinguished for their admiration of the ancient philosophy, we find this doctrine laid down with the utmost precision, as in the book of Marsilius Ficinus de Christiana Religione †. Nor is it unknown in the regions where the muses soar, for the Catholic poets took care that it should be proclaimed in solemn verse. Dante expressly introduces it into the seventh canto of his Paradise, where with theological accuracy it is stated and explained. "Man in himself, had ever lacked the means of satisfaction. Such is the lesson taught to him in the blissful seats, where are none who place obtained for merit of their own; and man had vainly tried out of his own sufficiency to pay the rigid debt: for justice every method else were all too scant, had not the Son of God, humbled himself to put on mortal flesh ‡." Tasso in like manner alludes to it where he represents the hermit conversing with Rinaldo.

" ' My Lord,' he said, ' your travels wondrous are,
 Far have you strayed, erred, wander'd far :
 Much are you bound to God above, who brought
 You safe from false Armida's charmed hold ;
 Yet may'st thou not, polluted thus with sin,
 In his high service war or fight begin :
 The world, the flesh, with their infections vile
 Pollute thy thoughts impure, thy spirit stain ;
 Not Po, not Ganges, not seven-mouthed Nile,
 Not the wide seas can wash thee clean again :
 Only to purge all faults which thee defile,
 His blood hath power who for thy sins was slain §.' "

* Angelo Politian, Epist. Lib. IV.

‡ Parad. VII. and XXXII.

VOL. VI.

† Cap. 20.

§ XVIII. 7.

In fine, even the material monuments of the middle ages would be sufficient to prove that the whole world had been imbued with the spirit of this divine doctrine of mercy-tempered justice which Rufinus supposes to have been known to the Egyptian priests and philosophers, who, in their hieroglyphics, by the figure of a cross expressed, he says, the hope of future salvation. Churches, palaces, thrones, sceptres, banners, panoplies, trophies, tombs, all would be unintelligible without this key. At the mention of tombs, reader, methinks I see you beckon to me as one who would say, here let us pause a while. It is true the ancient sepulchres, with their inscriptions and emblems, are most worthy of being examined if it were only from a consideration of the direct evidence which they furnish to the belief of men : well then let us examine a few, and confirm our annals by this testimony from the dead. The tombs of the unjust proclaim that the hope of their tenants was in their own virtue. The heretics of the middle ages, generally took care that posterity should be made acquainted with their merits. The emperor Frederick the Second, buried at Monte Reale, near Palermo, was commemorated on his tomb by his natural son, Manfred, in these terms :

“ Si probitas, sensus, virtutis gratia, intellectus,
Nobilitas oris possent resistere morti,
Non foret extinctus Fredericus qui manet intus.”

No such style of fond sepulchral flattery is traced in Catholic epitaphs. Examine, for example, the marble tomb of Junius Bassus, which was found in the Vatican cemetery under the confessional of St. Peter in the year 1595, when the time-worn pavement was disturbed. On this is exquisitely carved many histories of the ancient and the new testament which all have relation to the redemption of man by the blood of Christ. The sacrifice of Abraham, the brazen serpent, and the scape-goat, appear on many of the ancient sarcophaguses found in the different cemeteries, which may be seen represented in any of the works which treat on subterraneous Rome. No one need be told what symbols are found in the cathedrals and other churches of the middle age. The brazen effigy of Heribert, archbishop of Milan, in the eleventh century, on his tomb which is in the church of St. Dio-

nysius in that city, is placed at the foot of an image of the Saviour's cross. The epitaph ends with these lines:

" Nunc tumulor servus servorum, Christe, tuorum ;
Pro meritis horum, tibi digne complacitorum
Sanguine, quæso, tuo, mihi tu miserere redempto *."

The old inscription on the tomb of Adelhard, founder of the cathedral of Ferrara, ended thus,—

" Per meritum Christi requiem deposcimus isti †."

Mark the ancient epitaph on the tomb of Raban Maur, in the monastery of St. Alban, in the chapel of St. Boniface at Mayence, in which his body was laid to rest after ruling the abbey of Fulda during twenty years, and the see of Mayence nine.

" Nunc ego te ex tumulo, frater dilecte, juvando
Commendes Christo me ut precibus Domino,
Judicis æterni me ut gratia salvet in ævum,
Non meritum aspiciens, sed pietatis opus.
Hraban nempe mihi nomen, cui lectio dulcis
Divinæ legis semper ubique fuit.
Cui Deus omnipotens tribuat cœlestia regna
Et veram requiem semper in arce Poli ‡."

Read now the epitaph on the tomb of Ratbod Frisius, a celebrated philosopher of the ninth century, and archbishop of Utrecht, composed by himself.

" Esuries te, Christe Deus, sitis atque videndi
Jam modo carnales me vetat esse dapes.
Da mihi te vesci, te potum haurire salutis,
Unicus ignotæ tu cibus esto viæ.
Et quem longa fames errantem ambesit in orbe,
Hunc satia vultu, Patris imago, tuo.

O Deus omnipotens, cuius pietate redemptus
Subsistit mundus, qua generatus homo,
Respic me miserum peccati mole gravatum
Et nimio pressum pondere, Christe, leva.
Ereptumque gregis dira de sorte ministri,
Judicis inter oves tempore siste tuas §."

Lastly, hear how the legist of Bologna, in the time of Frederick the First, is commemorated.

* Italia Sacra, Tom. IV. 107.

† Id. Tom. I. 516.

‡ Historia Fuldensis, Pars III.

§ Bulæus, Histor. Universit. Parisiens. Tom. I.

“ Transiit ut vivat mundanæ legis alumnus :
 Mors sit ei requies, ultima vita Deus.
 Urbis honor, mundi speculum, jacet hic Ugolinus :
 Christus qui novit parcere, parcat ei.”

But not merely tombs, all the material monuments of the middle ages bore witness to the universality of this faith, for no place was left without its symbol ; and the cross would never have been the object most familiar to all eyes, exhibited continually under every possible variety of associations, if there had not been a knowledge of the doctrine which it signified. “ He who places his trust in the mystery of the cross,” says St. Basil, “ may truly be said to have found the cross of our Lord with holy Helena ;” “ for,” adds Louis of Grenada, “ this is spiritually to find the cross of our Lord. For it would have been of no avail to find the wood of the cross unless we found also the mystery and philosophy of the cross, which consists in this hope and in this love *.” Look back now through the tide of times, and hear Raban Maur teaching in verse and prose the theology of the holy cross.

“ O crux, quæ summi es voto dedicata trophæo !
 O crux, quæ Christi es claro benedicta triumpho !
 Te Patriarcharum laudabilis actio signat,
 Plebsque prophetarum divino flamme jussa,
 Agmen Apostolicum pandit tua rite trophæa,
 Martyrum et ipse chorus effuso jure cruento.
 En arx alma crucis, en fabrica facta salutis,
 En thorus hic regis, hæc conciliatio mundi.
 Signa crucis Christi Seraphim cœlestia monstrant,
 Distentisque alis brachia tensa notant.
 Crux sacra, tu æterni es Regis victoria Christi,
 Est orbi toti Domini quoque passio vita.
 In cruce lex Domini decoratur luce corusca,
 Gentes et linguæ sociantur laude sacrata,
 Crux æterna Dei laus, vivis in arce polorum.
 Crux, superis placita es. Crux, hinc es navita mundo,
 Rabanum memet clemens rogo Christe tuere,
 O pie judice.”

“ The passion of the cross,” he continues, “ sustains the heavens, rules the world, penetrates hell. By that the angels are confirmed, the people redeemed, the enemies overthrown : this the Author of all provided and constructed that in it he might restore all things and re-

* Ludovic. Granat. in Inventione S. Crucis Concio, III.

unite all things by Jesus Christ our Lord. O truly good and holy cross of Christ, who can rightly tell of thee or worthily recount thy praise ! Thou art the pious dis-
closer of celestial secrets, the sacred guardian of the mys-
teries of God, the fit dispenser of the sacraments of the
church. On thee the angels gaze, accumulating their
joys : from thee men learn the right of their salvation ;
in thee the inhabitants of hell perceive the just retribu-
tion of their fraud. Thou dost renew the past, illumi-
nate the present, foreshow the future ; thou dost seek
what was lost, preserve what is found, restore the fallen,
and direct them in the way of peace : thou art the victory
of the eternal King, the joy of the celestial hosts, the
strength of the inhabitants of earth ; thou art remission
of sins, and the way of the just ; thou art the remedy of
the sick, the help of the labourers, the refreshment of
the weary ; thou art the state of those that believe well,
the security of those that work well, the habit of those
that persevere well ; and whatever worthily can be thought
of the redemption of the world, whatever praise can be
uttered by the tongues of men and angels, is properly
applied to thy honour ; for whatever is praised in thee
is ascribed to Christ crucified. To thee, O Lord Jesu
Christ, I offer humble prayers that thou wouldest deign
to inspire me, a sinner, so that I may sing the honour of
thy holy cross, and preach to my fellow-servants the truth
of our common salvation. Nor doth the consciousness of
my own sins refrain me from this undertaking, but rather
it giveth me confidence, because in this song I celebrate
how thou hast destroyed the kingdom of sin, and granted
pardon to the whole world. Hail, venerable cross of God,
that art the wisdom and light of the orb of worlds ! How
much more worthy of being styled a throne imperial than
an instrument of servile torture, since our Emperor and
King by thee acquired all power in heaven and on earth,
overcame his enemies and redeemed a world ! ” This is
from the wondrous book on the theology of the cross,
which Raban Maur sent to the emperor Lewis and to
the Palatines. And what words can more clearly express
that hunger of grace which Bernardine of Sienna shows
to be an element in that which seeks justice, and which,
according to the promise of Christ, was to be filled ? To
remain any longer, therefore, on this subject, would be
an unnecessary delay. Perhaps I have already passed

beyond the stretch of indulgence. If historical truth could have been otherwise defended, it would certainly have been better to have at once turned away from these stale objections, and imitated the royal disposition of the lion, which preys on nothing that seems dead.

You can now, I trust, reader, form some judgment of the ages of faith in regard to the hunger and thirst after that true and highest beauty which, as St. Augustin saith, is justice *. You have heard in part the testimony of history respecting those throughout the earth who believed in Christ, separated from the vices of the world, and from the darkness of sinners, restored to grace, and associated with sanctity. Such was the last age, whose coming the noble Mantuan proclaimed on the authority of a mystic, and to him, doubtless, unintelligible song ; thus arose and revolved that great order of ages recalling the Saturnian kingdoms, beholding a renovated world, justice returned, times of primeval innocence restored, and a new race descended from above. For who must not be agreed with the Christian platonist of Florence †, in believing that these predictions referred to the purgation of minds, and to the doctrines and justice of Christ which were to abolish the vestiges of the ancient fraud ; that by the offspring of this kind which was to behold heroes mixed with gods, and to be seen by them, and which was to govern the universal world, was implied not the posterity of a Pollio, a private citizen to whose infant son so prudent and modest a poet as the great sovran of the pastoral song, would never have applied such a hyperbole, but the generation of those that sought through his eternal son the God of Jacob, who were to have angels ministers, and a legislator over them constituted by God, that the nations might know that they were men--words strictly fulfilled when the whole world, as the church declares, experienced and beheld the fallen raised, what was old, renewed, and all things in part restored to their pristine form, by him from whom they took their beginning. Such was the generation of the meek when directed by him in judgment, and taught his ways, when their humility and labour were seen by him and all their sins remitted. Such, in fine, was the

* Tractat. in Ps. li.

† Marsil. Ficin. De Christiana Religione, cap. 24.

Catholic society during ages of faith, militant, not triumphant, in communion with God, suffering on earth, afflicted, therefore, in great labours, in perils amidst false brethren, infirm on beholding infirmity, burning at the scandal daily witnessed, having to endure many things, to deplore many things, but notwithstanding all disorders, and all the vicissitudes and calamities incident to its mighty struggle, so glorious and so just.

In this argument we have only followed the course adopted by philosophers in their study of the sciences, who, from a multitude of observations made at different intervals, arrive at their conclusion respecting the general laws of all physical phenomena. If single observations should give a result slightly different from that to which the generality lead, they conclude, without hesitation, that the fault is theirs, the error in their observation, and that the even line is the general law; so have we determined the direct movement of the middle ages in relation to the sun of justice, from a series of observations, the inequality and errors of which, taken separately, are compensated by their accumulation.

In conclusion, it falls not to the historian's office to show how the third object of the hunger after justice, which is that of glory, which the blessed suffer in celestial glory, in whom is always the desire, not penal of what is absent, but beatific of what is present, was fulfilled to the generations past, for that would lead him beyond the limits of earth and time, to speak of things heavenly and eternal. It will be sufficient to hear a Bernardine of Sienna, briefly declare what hunger and fulness must have been theirs, when he says, that, "in the intelligence there will be a thirst after the divine vision, which will be satiated by seeing God; in the memory a thirst after divine security, satisfied by the promise of possessing God, and all things in God for ever, according to the words of Christ, 'et gaudium vestrum nemo tollet a vobis'; and in the will a thirst after divine love, which will be satiated in beholding the end of all consummation in the act of the will, to which as nobler than that of the intelligence, is annexed the joy of inebriation from the fulness of his house and from the torrent of his pleasure. Thus are we to understand the last sounds—'non esurient neque sitiens amplius.'"

As swimmers are often carried down with the stream a long way before they can reach the shore, so have I

suffered myself to be borne along by this discourse. Yet I have not indulged in any wanton digressions, but the force of the subject itself carried me away; and if I should have returned to things that had been before considered in relation to the meek, their no less intimate connection with justice compelled me to do so. It was one on which it was difficult to speak passably well; for he that had acquaintance with it will think that I have not said enough, and he who has no knowledge of it will suppose that I have been guilty of exaggeration. Moreover, the knowledge of such histories and monuments as have been cited here, belongs not to all men alike, for as Clemens Alexandrinus says, “Some men only see the body of the writing, the letters, and names, as it were, the body of Moses, but others discern the mind and thoughts which are conveyed under these names. They see, as it were, the angels that co-operated with Moses *.” But, for the sixth vision hasteneth to an end, here break we off, content with the general impressions which must have been produced by this vast spectacle, without seeking at the end to present any other recapitulation but what may be gathered from the indistinct, blissful sounds—the short transcendent fragments proclaiming an eternal victory, that seem to float around us. How could we coolly return to review and analyse with the art of a cautious and ambitious rhetorician, the pageantry of heaven’s grace which we have in a manner partially beheld! “Domine, domine noster: quam admirabile est nomen tuum in universa terra!” Reader, you have in these words the recapitulation, the best epitome of the whole argument. The vision dies as it were away, and yet the sense of sweet that sprang from it still remaineth in the heart. As we close this book, which tells of the long thirst appeased, methinks a song angelical is heard, and holy, holy, holy, accordant with the just triumphant, a renovated world sings.

* Stromat. Lib. VI. c. 15.

END OF THE SIXTH BOOK.

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